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THE
PADMA-PURĀṆA

PART VII

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY
Dr. N.A. DESHPANDE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

But he has neither the means nor the leisure to embark on that course. We have, therefore, planned to help him acquire knowledge by an easier course. We have started the series of Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium of expression. The publication of the Purāṇas in English Translation is a step towards that goal.

PREFACE

With the publication of this seventh part of the Padma Purāṇa we have now made available forty-five volumes in the AITM series to the students and scholars of Indology. This part comprises chapters 1–81 of the sixth and the largest section, viz. Uttarakhaṇḍa of the Padma Purāṇa, consisting of a total of 255 chapters. Though the existing text of the Purāṇa is complete in seven sections, the Kriyāyogakhaṇḍa being the last, the present section in chapter 1, vv. 66–70 enumerates only five sections as belonging to the Purāṇa, omitting thus two sections, viz. the Brahma and Kriyāyoga. It appears that originally there were only five sections, the Uttarakhaṇḍa, as the name itself indicates, being the last one, but later two more sections were added. As to the period of time when this was done, Winternitz opines that it was perhaps after the composition of the Bhāgavata.

The major themes of this part are the birth, adventures and ultimate defeat and death of the demon Jālandhara in chapters 3—18 and a description of the Ekādaśī and other vows in chapters 30—70 and 77. There is a duplication of two names, viz. Putradā Ekādaśī and Kāmadā Ekādaśī, as the former occurs as the tittle of two chapters, 41 and 55, and the latter as that of chapters 47 and 63. This could be taken as one among the indications of the multiple authorship of the Purāṇa.

The reader will find the following informations gleaned from this part especially instructive.

The gods Śiva and Viṣṇu are not different but identical. "Viṣṇu is Śiva and Śiva is Viṣṇu." We can say that they are only functionally two but existentially one, and this has been emphasized by the Purāṇa frequently elsewhere also as an answer perhaps to the controversy arising from the appearance of divergent warring sects in course of time.

Ridiculing gods, their images and religious and sectarian practices associated with their worship due to egotism, parti-

cular sectarian leanings etc. is strongly disparaged. A brāhmaṇa indulging in this is declared to be a cāṇḍāla and one is said to undergo a very despicable birth for thousands of years in the form of "worms in feces."

Muttering God's names is recommended as especially efficacious in this age for freeing oneself from sins and attaining the highest spiritual position. "A man obtains by repeating the names of Viṣṇu in the Kali age what he obtains by meditation in the Kṛta age, by performing sacrifices in the Tretā age and by worshipping Viṣṇu in the Dvāpara age." The *Thousand Names of Viṣṇu* are narrated in chapter 71, but in the end it is said that the thousand names are equal to the single name 'Rāma'.

The author(s) of the Purāṇa has (have) a good sense of humor, as is proved on many occasions when we meet a ludicrous or incongruous situation in this part as well as elsewhere. God Brahmā is usually made a laughingstock on account of his beard. Once Brahmā takes the child Jālandhara in his lap when the latter catches his beard which the former is unable to free from his hand—this naturally makes the child's father Ocean laugh. In another situation, Śiva fashions a disc out of the tejas contributed by gods and sages for the destruction of the mighty demon Jālandhara. Śiva gives that disc into Brahmā's hands for inspection and appreciation. He seeing that the beard of Brahmā is burnt by the sparks issuing from the powerful weapon laughs and takes it quickly back. Brahmā is again made a butt of laughter when Kīrtimukha, a hungry attendant of Śiva, proceeds to eat Brahmā but is warded off by Śiva. Perhaps this indicates that the cult of this god of the Trinity had already declined and lost its popularity long before this Purāṇa was composed while the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava cults were still very much thriving.

There are so many passages in this part which show, as against the popular belief of there being one Nandin, that at least two Nandins existed in Śiva's entourage—one, the chief of Śiva's attendants (gaṇas) and a general of his army and the other, the bull, Śiva's vehicle. "Śiva said to Nandin, the chief of his attendants: 'You should kill the brave, great demon Jālandhara, in battle'." Again, "Then hearing the words of

Pārvatī Śiva said to Vīrabhadra: 'Quickly make ready my bull (i.e. Nandin)' " (ch. 12).

There occur many names of historical and geographical interest in this part too, which include some unfamiliar ones also, such as 'Go', a mountain (ch. 6, v. 22) and 'Gaṇḍikā', a sacred river (ch. 75), which are rather difficult to identify. The name '*Medinī*' (i.e. the earth) is explained thus: "The entire earth was filled with the marrow of the Ocean's son. O king, due to the marrow (*medas*) only Medinī got that name" (chap. 18, v. 109). A mythological origin of gems and metals is described in chap. 6, vv. 25—31. When Indra struck the demon Bala by his thunderbolt, the latter's body was shattered to pieces which fell on the earth. "From his eyes dropped sapphires. Rubies were produced from his ears...copper was produced from his urine...Gold was produced from his nails..."

Charity is extolled as a very great virtue. The gift of food, especially to a brāhmaṇa who is tired and travelling, is considered of exceptional merit. Offering food even to a śūdra is superior to any other gift. Giving food and water is considered the best of gifts. A preceptor is the most venerable of all the worthy recipients of gifts and a knower of the Purāṇas is the best recipient. Since he saves ('*tra*') a man from falling ('*pāṭa*'), he is called a '*pāṭra*' (a deserving recipient). Land is another praiseworthy gift destroying the great sins of murdering a brāhmaṇa, a woman, a child and killing cows. Snatching another's land and a brāhmaṇa's property are considered greatest sins. Incidentally, brāhmaṇa was the most privileged caste in ancient and medieval India deserving the highest veneration and protection by the state and society in view of his most vital role in society.

Acknowledgements

It is our pleasant duty to put on record our sincere thanks to Dr. R.N. Dandekar and the UNESCO authorities for their kind encouragement and valuable help which render this work more useful than it would otherwise have been. We are extremely grateful to Dr. N.A. Deshpande for translating the text. We are also thankful to all those who have been helpful in our project.

—*Editor*

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona
AGP	S.M. Ali's *The Geography of Purāṇas*, PPH, New Delhi, 1973
AIHT	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, F. E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi
AITM	*Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* Series, MLBD, Delhi
AP	*Agni Purāṇa*, Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
Arch. S.Rep.	Archaeological Survey Report
AV	*Atharva Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Bd. P.	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, MLBD, Delhi 1973
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br.	*Brāhmaṇa* (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BS. P.	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BV. P.	*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*, GM, 1955-57
CC	*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* by Hemādri
CVS	*Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra* by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	*Devī Bhāgavata*, GM, 1960-61
De or GDAMI	*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, N.L. De, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971
Dh. S.	*Dharma Sūtra* (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama)
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings
GP	*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ed. R. S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964

GS	*Gṛhya Sūtra* (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba)
HD	*History of Dharma Śāstra*, P.V. Kane, G. O. S.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*The Indian Historical Quarterly*
JP	*Purāṇa* (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*
KP	*Kūrma Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*, GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981
Manu.	*Manusmṛti*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MN	*Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*, GM, 1954
MW	Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	*Nāradīya* or *Nārada Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay
PCK	*Bhāratavarṣīya Prācīna Caritrakośa*, Siddheshwar Shastri, Poona, 1968
Pd. P.	*Padma Purāṇa*, GM, 1957-59
PE	*Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, V. Mani, English version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	*Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, R. C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948
ṚV	*Ṛg-Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SC or SMC	*Smṛti Candrikā* by Devanna Bhaṭṭa
SEP	*Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, A.D. Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), Bombay

VI UTTARAKHAṆḌA

(The Sequel or Concluding Section)

CHAPTER ONE

The Contents of the Section in Brief

1-2. Om, salutation to Śrī Viṣṇu. Om salutation to Śrī Vedavyāsa.

Om, having saluted Nārāyaṇa, so also Nara, the best among men, and goddess Sarasvatī and Vyāsa, one should narrate the (god's) glory. Salutation to the preceptor who opened the eyes of one who is blind due to the darkness of ignorance with the pencil of the collyrium of knowledge.

The sages said:

3-4. O best among the learned, we have heard the Pātālakhaṇḍa full of various accounts and giving great joy, which you narrated (to us). Now we desire to hear what remains (i.e. the remaining portion) of the Padma (Purāṇa), and which augments devotion to the lord. O preceptor, please narrate it.

Sūta said:

5-7a. O sages, listen, all of you, to what Śaṅkara told Nārada who asked him, and which is the knowledge that destroys sins. Once Nārada, dear to the lord, while roaming over the worlds went to Mandara mountain to ask Śambhu some secret. There he saluted the lord of Umā who was seated. Directed by Śiva's order, he sat on a seat in front of the lord. He asked the god the same as you, the best ones, have asked.

Nārada said:

7b-8. O lord, O god of gods, O lord of Pārvatī, O preceptor

of the world, tell me that by which the knowledge about the truth of lord can be had.

Śiva said:

9-15. O Nārada, listen to the Purāṇa which I shall tell you, which is like the Vedas and hearing which a man is free from all sins. There is no doubt about it. First there is the glory of Uttara. Then there is the story of the Parvata (Mountain). Then there is the narration of Haridvāra; then there is the account of (Gaṅgā) rising from Viṣṇu's feet. I shall also describe the holy place of Prayāga, so also the (holy place called) Aśvamedhika. I shall tell (you) about the greatness of Tulasī; so also (I shall describe) the conch, the disc, the mace etc. Then there is the account of Dvārakā. (Then there are) the rules about a great festival. (So also) there is the description of the religious merit obtained from (bathing in) a lake, so also (from bathing in) a reservoir of water, a well, or a cistern; (there is the description of the views of) the Gāṇapatya, of the holy texts of the Vaiṣṇavas; (then) there is (the description) of the greatness of repairs (of old temples etc.); of visiting Gangā; of the greatness of Sābhramatī; so also of the banks (of rivers etc.), of the duties of women and śūdras and of what (course) should be followed by those who are forsaken.

16-19. In the dialogue between Umā and Maheśa *The Thousand Names of Viṣṇu* are told. That was brought from Kailāsa by Nārada, the brāhmaṇa. It should be recited with a concentrated mind to the people, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and especially to women and śūdras. It is holy; it is pure; it increases (the span of) life; it should be especially recited; (thereby a man) would obtain intimate union with Viṣṇu. That hymn containing the thousand names of Viṣṇu is known in the world to be purifying. It (i.e. the Uttarakhaṇḍa) will tell about the places of the twentyfour images.

20-24a. I shall tell about their parents and their interior. I shall also tell you about their family, their Vedas, their deeds; so also about their wives, as I see these from my knowledge. (I shall tell you) about the importance of the twentyfour Ekādaśī days and Dvādaśī days. (I shall narrate to you) the greatness of Godāvarī; so also about putting on (one's person) the conch and

ths disc. Brāhmaṇas especially should put these on with a rite. O sage, I shall describe to you the importance of Yamunā, so also of Gaṇḍikā. I shall undoubtedly tell you about the greatness of Vetravatī. (I shall tell you) about the religious merit due to (a visit to) the holy place called Gilli. I shall describe to you the Śilā Kṣetra which is great.

24b-28. All that I shall describe in the Khaṇḍa called Uttara. (I shall narrate to you) the greatness of Arbudeśvara and the holy places etc. that are there. (I shall similarly tell you about) the importance of Sarasvatī and the holy place called Siddhakṣetra. (I shall tell you about) the rise of Padmanābha and the wearing of Tulasī(-leaves etc.). (I shall tell you about) the greatness of gopīcandana, and about the worship of the throne. (I shall describe to you) the greatness of Nirañjana (i.e. Śiva); so also about the vision of knowledge; so also about offering of lights there, and especially of incense. (I shall tell you about) the importance of Kārtika and also that of Māgha. I shall tell you about the greatness of all vows (performed) duly.

29-33a. O Nārada, I shall tell you about (the holy place of) Jagannātha, the best one, seeing whom men are freed from the sin of the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc. (Please) listen; whatever is performed and experienced there gives (i.e. leads one to) the other world. (Even) brāhmaṇas, well-versed in the Vedas eat there; then what to say about other people, O you of a good vow! Here there are twentyfive serpents and various famale dancers also. On seeing Jagannātha (the sins due to murders such as) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, the murder of a child or that of a cow, all perish. A being (just while) uttering (the name) *Jagannātha* is free from great sins.

33b-36. I shall tell you about Viṣṇu's worship with flowers, and its importance also. I shall tell you all that—the description of the mountains; so also the description of countries; so also the supreme greatness of worshipping the cow etc.; so also about the worship of the siddhas; (I shall also tell you about) the religious merit which is obtained when boiled rice is given (to brāhmaṇas). (I shall tell you about) the gift of the interior of a Kadalī; the gift of a tree. After that (I shall tell you about) the gift of a horse; the gift of an elephant; so also about the supreme importance of muttering (a hymn); so also about the

knowledge of hymns and initiation; about the characteristics of a preceptor.

37-43. In (the Uttarakhaṇḍa) the characteristics of a disciple, as the public readers of the Purāṇas know them, are also told. (So also it contains) the importance of the water (flowing) from the feet (of the superiors), and (the information about) śrāddha etc. offered to the dead ancestors; (it also contains information about) the gift to the manes on the days (fixed for making offerings to them); so also the rite of giving sapphires. (It also contains information about) the lunar and solar eclipses and (about) what gifts should be (given on these days). (It tells about) the importance of the gift of a Śālagrāma (stone); so also of flowers and sandal; about the time of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth (days) and about the days sacred to Viṣṇu. (It contains information about) their greatness and the names of Rudra etc. (It also gives the information about) the greatness of Mathurā, and (about) Kurukṣetra etc. (It also contains) the account of the construction of the bridge (over the sea); so also (the account) of Śrī Rāmeśvara. (It also contains the information about) the greatness of Tryambaka, and (about) the fruit of (staying at) Pañcavaṭī. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to the importance of the Daṇḍaka forest. (It tells about) the greatness of the Daṇḍaka forest and about the cause of the birth of Nṛsiṁha. (It tells about) the greatness of the Gītā; so also of the Bhāgavata, so also the importance of Kālindī (i.e. Yamunā), and the description of Indraprastha.

44-50. (It contains) the life of Rukmāṅgada and (tells about) the greatness of a devotee of Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, listen; if a devotee of Viṣṇu is fed but once, the man who feeds him gets that fruit which he would obtain by giving the entire earth along with ocean. The sāttvika are endowed with goodness; the rājasa are said to be lustful. The tāmasa are described to be vicious. The characteristics of the devotees of Viṣṇu are also described (in it). O Nārada, I shall tell you about the greatness, as described, of the brāhmaṇas who are devotees of Viṣṇu and who are intent upon practising the way of life as told in the Vedas. O best sage, then I shall tell you about the sin of those who, through greed for wealth, are engaged in censuring Viṣṇu. (I shall tell) you the account of Jvālāmukhī, and (about the importance

of) seeing the Himālaya. I shall describe to you the region where Brahmā was born. I shell tell you about the origin of kāyasthas; so also the account of Gayā. (I shall describe to you) the nature of Gadādhara and (give you) the description of (the river at Gayā called) Phalgu.

51-56a. In the Padma (Purāṇa), the importance of these is seen (and) is also heard (from it). (It also contains) the nature of great knowledge, and the glory of Kalki. (It contains the description of) Rāmagayā and Pretaśilā. I shall tell you the account of Brahmā and Śilā; so also the account of Brahmā's origin, and of the bunyan tree called Akṣaya. Great religious merit (accrues) by (performing) a śrāddha there. I shall tell (you) all about that. (I shall tell you about) the worship of Śiva done by the noble Viṣṇu. Even now Mahārudra mutters (the names of) Anāmaya (i.e. Viṣṇu). After that, O Nārada, I shall describe to you the greatness of the ocean; so also the religious merit due to the offering of sesamum seeds and also due to (the offering of) barley-grains; so also (the religious merit) due to the offering of water mixed with Tulasī leaves and due to. the (worship of) deity.

56b-59a. I shall tell you about its greatness as Brahmā told it to me. (I shall describe to you) the greatness of the sound of the conch and religious merit of its innumerable (varieties). (I shall tell you about) the greatness of Sunday, and of abstract maditation on him called Viṣṇu. (I shall tell you) the importance of Vaidhṛta and also of Vyatīpāta (i.e. a great calamity). O Nārada, I shall tell you all this, as has been told.

59b-64. Uttarakhaṇḍa tells about the gift of food, the gift of garments, the gift of land, so also (of) a bull, about the greatness of Janmāṣṭamī, the importance of the Matsya (Purāṇa), the importance of the Kūrma (Purāṇa) and so also of the Vāraha (Purāṇa). I shall also tell (you) the importance of the gifts of cows etc. After that I shall describe to you the greatness of the devotees like Prahlāda, who are well-known on the earth. Listen, O best divine sage. O best divine sage, (it contains) the importance of keeping awake (during certain nights); so also of the gift of lamps; so also (it tells about) the fruit of the separate worship (offered) during different watches. (It contains) the account

of Paraśurāma; so also (of) the murder of Reṇukā; so also (of) the gift of land made to brāhmaṇas and whatever Rāma did.

65-66a. I shall describe fully the religious merit due to (the stay in) Rāma's hermitage. I shall tell you the account of Narmadā, and that of the religious merit and the worship; so also (I shall tell you about) the gift of (the texts of) the Vedas and the Purāṇas and the form of the (various) stages of life.

66b-70. (I shall tell you about) the religious merit due to the gift of gold and that of the world; (about) the gift of the Padma Purāṇa and the nature of (its) Khaṇḍas. The first is Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa; the second is Bhūmikhaṇḍa. The third is Svargakhaṇḍa and the fourth is called Pātāla. The fifth is called Uttara. These are the Khaṇḍas in order. The noble Vyāsa composed this Padma Purāṇa for the well-being of the people and for the welfare of brāhmaṇas. It creates religious merit in śūdras, and removes acute poverty. It gives salvation and happiness and quickly brings about inexhaustible good fortune. O Nārada, having listened to it, a man should give gifts according to the rite (told therein).

CHAPTER TWO

Nārāyaṇa Grants Boons to Rudra

Maheśa said:

1-8a. There are one lakh and twentyfive thousand mountains. In the midst of them stands the very holy, excellent Badarikāśrama where, O Nārada, lives Nara-Nārāyaṇa. I shall now tell (you about) his nature and lustre. O brāhmaṇa, two men, of the form of Kṛṣṇa and called Nara and Nārāyaṇa, live on the peak of the Himālaya. One man is white; the other one is black. Those striving (to reach) the Himālaya go along that path (and reach them). The great lord is of a tawny and fair complexion and has matted hair. This is Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, the origin of the world and the great lord. He has four arms; he is great; is rich (or has Lakṣmī); is manifest; is unmanifest; and is

ancient. O you of a good vow, in the period of the summer solstice a great worship takes place there. (Then) for six months no worship is offered. The (region) is then covered with snow till the period of the winter solstice sets in. Therefore, such a deity was never there seen in the past nor will ever be in future.

8b-12. Gods live there; so also the hermitages of the sages are there. The oblations to Agni are made, the Vedas (are recited, and so) the sound (of their recital) is always heard there. A man should see the deity; it destroys (the sin of) a crore murders. A man should bathe where there is Alakanandā-Gaṅgā (confluence). He is free from a great sin after bathing there. There is no doubt that the god, the lord of the universe, dwells there. O brāhmaṇa, on one occasion I practised good (i.e. severe) penance (there). Then god Nārāyaṇa who favours his devotees, who is the immutable Puruṣa, who is actually the god having Garuḍa as his banner, was very much pleased, and said to me: "O you of a good vow, ask for a boon".

Śrī Nārāyaṇa said:

13. O god, whatever desire you have, I shall fulfil it. You are the lord of Kailāsa; you are actually Rudra, the protector of the universe.

Rudra said:

14-18. O god Janārdana, you are well-pleased. I shall completely accept (the boons). If you desire to grant boons, then grant me two boons. Let me always have devotion to you. I shall be (i.e. let me be) the chief among the devotees. Let all people say: 'This one is a constant devotee'. O lord, through your favour I shall be the giver of salvation. I shall grant (salvation) to those people who will resort to me. There is no doubt about this. In the world I shall be famous as Viṣṇu's devotee. O lord, let him whom I (will) grant a boon, have salvation. I, having matted hair, and with my body smeared with sacred ash, (would stay) near you. By the grace of your feet I shall be well-known in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

Jālandhara Is Born and Blessed by Brahmā

Sūta said:

1-6. Once Nārada went to the Kāmya forest to see the Pāṇḍavas emaciated due to grief. They properly received the brāhmaṇa. Then saluting the greatest sage, Yudhiṣṭhira said: "O venerable one, due to which act (of ours) have we fallen into this ocean of distress?" To him the sage said, "O son of Pāṇḍu, give up your grief. Which man is happy in this mundane existence which is an assemblage of pleasures and pains? Even the lord is not stable. He is troubled by the heaps of bodies. Nobody is free from grief; everyone has to put up with grief, since (even) the Sun's body is seized by Rāhu. Rāhu's head is also cut off by Viṣṇu at the time of enjoying (i.e. drinking) nectar. That god holding the Śārṅga bow (i.e. god Viṣṇu) also was thrown into the deep ocean by brave Jālandhara. He too was killed by Śiva."

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

7-8. Who was that brave Jālandhara? Whose son was he? Due to what was he strong? How did the bull-bannered god (Śiva) kill Jālandhara in a battle? O you treasure of penance, tell me all this in detail.

Thus addressed by the king (Yudhiṣṭhira), Nārada told (it).

Nārada said:

9. O king, listen to the divine tale which destroys the entire stream of sins; so also (listen to) the very wonderful (account of) the battle between Śiva and (Jālandhara) the son of the Ocean.

10-15. Once Indra who was crowded with the bevies of celestial nymphs, who was surrounded by many gods, who was crowded by gandharvas well-versed in the art of (playing upon) the lute, went to praise Śiva. (The celestial nymphs) Rambhā, Tilottamā, Rāmā, Karpūrā, so also Kadalī and Madanā, Bhāratī, Kāmā adorned with all ornaments and other female dancers went into the vicinity of the god (Śiva). Gandharvas, yakṣas, siddhas, so also Nārada and Tumburu, and kinnaras and female kinnaras repeatedly came there. So also

Vāyu, Varuṇa, Kubera, the giver of wealth, Yama, Agni, Nirṛti, so also other groups of deities (went there). Indra, seated in an aeroplane, celestial ladies seated in aeroplanes, and (other) gods seated in their own vehicles speedily went to Kailāsa.

16-23a. Then the gods saw that Kailāsa, an excellent mountain, the best among all the mountains, the ornament of the earth as it were. It stood giving pleasure on all sides, (was) pure and (stood) like the heap of superhuman powers. The trees there were the desire-yielding trees. The stones there gave whatever was desired. The mountain looked charming due to punnāga, nāga, campā, tilakā, devadāru, aśoka, pāṭala, mango, mandāra (trees). The breezes there carried the fragrance from the adjoining forest. The breezes from the Malaya (mountain) became crippled on account of a great movement. The wells there had crystal staircases, and their water was clean and deep. The lotuses (in them) resembling gold had clung to the emerald-like stalks. There the brightness of the white lotuses shone in all directions. The wells there were beautiful with white lotuses, and were covered with rubies. They were decked with green gems and were, on all sides, covered with the gomeda[1] (gems). They were constructed with ruby-stones, and were beautified with various minerals. They saw the Kailāsa mountain, more beautiful than heaven, and fashioned superior to it.

23b-30a. Seeing that greatest mountain Kailāsa, they were amazed. Indra and those deities got down from their aeroplanes. Then having come to Nandin, the door-keeper, they spoke (these) words: "O you best among the excellent attendants, listen to these good words: Quickly inform respectfully the lord of gods that the chief of gods (Indra), surrounded by all gods, has come here to dance." Having heard (these) words of Indra, Nandin said to Śiva: "O lord, this lord of gods, Indra, has come here with all (deities) to dance." Then (Śiva) said to him: "Quickly bring (in) the lord of Śacī (i.e. Indra)." Then Nandin brought in Indra along with them. He (i.e. Indra) seeing god Śiva, having the bull as his banner, praised him. All the female

1. Gomeda: A gem brought from the Himālayas and the Indus, described as of four different colours, viz. white, pale, yellow-red, and dark-blue.

dancers like Rambhā gladly danced there, near Śiva, with (i.e. to the accompaniment of) tabors, lutes and (other) musical instruments. Others, holding bell-metal musical instruments, lutes and large drums performed a zealous dance.

30b-34a. Indra himself excessively performed a beautiful dance, difficult (to be seen even) by gods. The god was delighted, (and) spoke (these) words to Indra: "O best among the gods, I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon". When the god of gods (i.e. Śiva) spoke like this, Indra who was proud of the might of his arms, said in reply (these) words to Hara (i.e. Śiva): "I ask for that battle in which I shall have a warrior like you (to fight with). O lord, grant me such a battle." Saying so, and having obtained a boon from lord Śiva, he went out.

34b-37a. When that Indra had left, Śiva said (these) words: "O attendants, listen to my words. The chief of gods has become very proud." Saying so, Śiva then became angry. Then his wrath manifested itself in a bodily form, and stood before him; (that) wrath, (dark) as dense darkness, then said to Śiva: "Give me the order. O lord, what do (i.e. should) I do for you?"

37b-41a. Then (Śiva) the lord of Umā said: "You, the brave one, (should) after reaching the heavenly river of the Ocean, go and conquer Indra." That wrath that was told like this, vanished. Those attendants were amazed. When the lord's ordinance took place, the celestial river due to the heat of her excessive youth, was excited with lust; and seeing her, the lordly Ocean was full of the billows of water. Then, O best king, the union between Gaṅgā and the Ocean took place. The great river, reaching (the Ocean) enjoyed according to her might.

41b-43. Meantime, a mighty, very brave son was born on the great river by the Ocean. O king, the son of the great Ocean, weeping as soon as he was born, shook the earth. The three worlds resounded. Brahmā gave up the position of his fingers formed during profound concentration.

44-45. Meantime (Brahmā) the creator seeing the three worlds alarmed, went to the great Ocean at the words of Indra. Thinking that it was a wonder, he, mounted on his swan, speedily went (to the Ocean). Seeing Brahmā to have arrived, the Ocean offered him worship. Then Brahmā said to him: "O Ocean, why do you roar in vain?"

The Ocean said:

46-48a. O lord of gods, I am not roaring. It is my mighty son (that is roaring). (Please) protect my child. To see you is difficult.

"Let the son be seen (i.e. Present the son to Brahmā)." (Thus) he spoke to his very charming wife. She, at the behest of her husband, approached Brahmā along with the son. Putting him on the lap of Brahmā, she saluted his feet.

48b-49. Then seeing the Ocean's son, Brahmā was indeed amazed. When Brahmā was unable to free from the hand of the child his beard seized by the child, the Ocean laughed and freeing the beard from the child's hand, seized the child's hand and left.

50. The self-born (Brahmā), seeing the child's valour like that, affectionately called him Jālandhara, and he became Jālandhara by name (i.e. was named Jālandhara).

51-52. The lord of the beings (i.e. Brahmā) affectionately granted him a boon: "This Jālandhara will be unconquerable (even) by gods. By my favour he will enjoy (the lordship of) the heaven along with the nether world." Speaking like this, Brahmā, mounting upon his swan, hurriedly disappeared.

CHAPTER FOUR

Jālandhara's Marriage and Consecration

Nārada said:

1-5. That boy thus gradually growing in his childhood, jumped on his mother's lap and ran to the ocean. Having brought the young ones of lions he, intent upon playing, put them into cages. Thus his was a fight of a lion with an elephant etc.; his valour was useful for a fight. From there he would fly into the sky and would drop down the birds on the ground. He, by means of his roars, frightened the heaven along with the ocean. O king, all the beings in the ocean were stricken by him

and due to his fear they concealed themselves. Seeing the water (of the ocean) without beings the submarine Fire, due to his fear, left his own region and entered the Himālaya (mountain).

6-8. That son of the Ocean gradually gave up childhood, reached youth, and valorously went to the heaven. Once the Ocean's son (i.e. Jālandhara) said to his father, the Ocean: "O father, give a very extensive place proper for my residence." Having understood the words of his son, the great Ocean said: "O son, I shall give you a kingdom difficult to be obtained on the earth."

9-10. Then Bhārgava (i.e. Śukra), the preceptor of the demons, went to the Ocean. Seeing him coming, the Ocean worshipped him duly. Then when he was seated on the seat which had the lustre of gems having beauty spreading out, and which was offered by the lord of rivers, he had the great lustre like that of the lotus-born (Brahmā seated) upon the beautiful region of the peak of the Meru mountain charming with lustre.

11-13. The Ocean, joining the palms of his hands, said to Śukra: "Luckily (for me) you have come here. Tell me what I should do." Then Śukra, the preceptor of the family of demons, said to the Ocean: "What is the use of him who, being born, (simply) robs his mother of her youth, and does not grow above (the members of) his own family like a flag? Your son, due to his valour, will certainly enjoy the three worlds.

14-17. You have inundated a great seat on the Jambūdvīpa which is resorted to by the female attendants of Durgā. Give it up as the abode of Jālandhara. O great Ocean, give the kingdom there (i.e. of that region) to this son of yours. Being there he will be unconquerable and free from death." The Ocean thus addressed by Bhārgava (i.e. Śukra) with love, easily moved away, and due to his love for his son, showed (him) the place in the water. It was a hundred yojanas extensive, and was three hundred yojanas long. The auspicious country was well-known as Jālandhara after him.

18-31. The Ocean having called the excellent demon Maya, said to him: "Fashion a city for Jālandhara in the seat (i.e. region) of Jālandhara." Thus told by the ocean, Maya fashioned a city full of gems, having ramparts and city gates and having houses with staircases. In it the peacocks, engaged in violent

dances, and remaining on the grounds of the mansions decked with sapphires took them to be the movement of the clouds. In it the birds resorted to the rays rising from the ground (decked) with corals and rubies, taking them to be the lovely mango-sprouts. In it the peacocks, seeing in the golden mansions, the brilliance (as) in fires, ran away fearing it to be the wild fire. In it the directions are mingled with the lustre coming up from the crystal chambers. They appear as it were rising from the Mandara (mountain), and resemble the ocean with foam. In it the bright women, standing in groups in their mansions and with their faces resembling the full moon of the evening caused infatuation. In it the joys from the park with breezes made fragrant by indranīpa flowers etc. entered the women's hearts and brought about the fever of fascination (in their hearts). In it a man, on seeing a coitus drawn in a picture, doubly indulges in it while engaged in a coitus with his wife. In it the lines of the smoke of the incense rising from the windows have become the sky resembling the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The entire sky in (i.e. above) it looks like being covered with a rainbow due to the lustre coming out from many houses and with autumnal cloud rising in it. In it the horses of the Sun, that have constantly wandered (and therefore are) very much vexed, take rest after remaining on the tops of mansions at midday. In it the excellent women in some of the mansions, wearing jasmine wreaths, shone like stars rising at night. In it the sound due to the friction of the chains of the golden swing made the ground beautiful like that of the Meru (mountain).

32-33. The Ocean along with the rivers and with Śukra consecrated there his son (as the king) with self-sounding musical instruments. We expect (i.e. think) that (Śukra) performed the auspicious rite at the time of the marriage of the Earth (with Jālandhara and his consecration as the king) with gay incantations and with words—the beautiful female swans as it were, in the lake of the mouth of Brahmā, with which the self-lustrous self-born (Brahmā) (performed the auspicious rite) at the time of Skanda's victory over Tāraka, and with which Bṛhaspati (the preceptor of gods) performed (the auspicious rite) at the time of the festival of the sovereignty of Indra.

34-36. The great Ocean gave Jālandhara a fierce army that

sprang from his interior and that (amounted to) a thousand mahāpadmas. Śukra also gave Jālandhara through love his infatuating lore called *Mṛta-sañjīvanī* and infatuating Rudra. Brahmā also gave the Ocean's son (i.e. Jālandhara) various other lores (secrets) of weapons and missiles. All else was then explained to him by Śukra.

37-40. Then having consecrated Jālandhara, his son, the Ocean, surrounded by the rivers, went with a divine body to his place. Jālandhara saw that divine city adorned with city gates; and being well honoured by groups of brāhmaṇas, moved with Śukra (into the city). In the meanwhile all the very mighty demons residing in the nether world and led by Kālanemi, came to Jālandhara. Then the very mighty heroes appointed the demon Śumbhāsura the general of the army resembling the milky ocean.

41-44. Then that Jālandhara, having brought under his control his army on the earth and making the water stable, looked after the kingdom given by his father. Meantime there was formerly in heaven a celestial nymph named Svarṇā. Due to Krauñca's favour a daughter named Vṛndā was born to her. The Creator fashioned the body of Vṛndā, to see the beauty along with splendour which he had made separately in one place. Svarṇā gave that young, beautiful girl Vṛndā, charming in all limbs and infatuating people, to Śukra who solicited her for (being married to) Jālandhara.

Śukra said:

45-52. O you beautiful lady, live long and be happy with the wonderful weapon of Cupid, that (hurts) the eyes of the world. Obtain him—the brave man—of large eyes, as your husband, not seeing whom the women have fixed Cupid as the man.

(Jālandhara), the son of the Ocean married Vṛndā according to the Gāndharva type of marriage. O king, the couple caused delight to the people. She gave up her fickleness. Jālandhara too, following the practice of wise men, did not long for any other woman. Once, while seated in his assembly, he saw Rāhu with his head cut off; he asked Śukra, "Why is he one whose half body (only) remains?" He told him the old account from the beginning

as to how the milky ocean was churned by the gods for (securing) nectar. Hearing it, the demon Jālandhara who was amazed, spoke (these) words: "You become favourable to Rāhu and of a handsome form." With the advice of Śukra, the valorous son of the Ocean, remembering his paternal uncle started a war with the gods, O brave one.

CHAPTER FIVE

War Between Gods and Demons

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Who is the paternal uncle of the Ocean's son? What happened to him in the war? How did the demon fight? O Nārada, tell me that.

Nārada said:

2-5. O best king, listen. The Milky Ocean is the paternal uncle of Jālandhara. After the gods and the demons had churned from him Lakṣmī, the Moon, the elephant (called Airāvata), the horse (named Uccaiḥśravas) the gods snatched the wealth. Hearing that the demon Jālandhara fought with the gods. Once the mighty one, having instructed his messenger what to speak, sent him, Durvāraṇa (by name), to the residence of the lord of gods. Then, getting into a chariot, Durvāraṇa went to heaven. Desiring to enter the residence, he was prohibited by the door-keepers.

The massenger said:

6-11. I am Jālandhara's messenger. I have come to Indra. Please go there and respectfully inform (Indra) about me (i.e. my arrival).

Then a door-keeper, having heard his words, just then went to (Indra), the lord of Śacī. Having saluted him, he said: "O lord, a messenger from the earth has come." To him Indra said:

"Bring (in) the messenger." He, holding the hand of the messenger, brought him near Indra. Durvāraṇa entered the assembly of the gods. He saw Indra who was surrounded by thirty-three crore gods, (who was seated upon) a divine, golden throne, who was waited upon with the breezes (produced) by chowries, whose one thousand eyes resembling fully bloomed lotuses were full of the feeling of love for Śacī. Then Durvāraṇa, seeing the lord of gods along with Bṛhaspati, (and) laughing at the beauty of his eyes, saluted him.

12-20. That messenger of Jālandhara occupied the seat that was pointed out. Indra said to him: "To whom do you belong? On what mission have you come?" He said to Indra: "I am Jālandhara's envoy. He is the king of all worlds. From my mouth listen to his order: 'Why did you, by employing the Mandara mountain (as the churning rod) churn my uncle, the Milky Ocean? You took away the treasure, the great wealth like Lakṣmī, the Moon, the elephant (viz. Airāvata), the horse (called Uccaiḥśravas), gems like corals. Give (back) all that. So also, O Indra, quickly leave the heaven. By my words, quickly do everything that is proper. If you desire to live, apologise to the king." Then Indra laughed and spoke to Durvāraṇa: "O messenger, hear in brief the reason for churning the Ocean. Formerly my enemy Maināka, the son of Himālaya, was held by the foolish Ocean in his side, and the wicked Ocean also held (i.e. supported) the Fire in the form of a horse, who had burnt the mobile and the immobile. This lord is the place of refuge of the demons, the haters of Dharma. He always gives curd, ghee, milk to the demons.

21-24. O Durvāraṇa, therefore, he was churned by us; and he, with his wealth lost, was punished by the ancient gods. O messenger, listen. He was dried up by the brāhmaṇa (Agastya) born from a pitcher, due to his (i.e. Agastya's) association with me. Moreover, he is tormented due to his bad company. (If) he also, surrounded by his entire army, will come to fight with us, he will just then meet with destruction." Speaking like this, (Indra) the killer of Vṛtra, ceased (speaking). He loudly praised the messenger of the Ocean's son. (The messenger), having come (back) to the son of the Ocean, told him everything from the beginning that the lord of gods had said.

Nārada said:

25-34a. Having heard Indra's words (i.e. message) from the mouth of his messenger, the Ocean's son became angry and called his entire army. Then by (Jālandhara's) order the demons who lived in the lower world, so also those who lived on the earth came there with their armies to Jālandhara. He set out on a march. Due to the roars of the army of the Ocean's son, O king, the sky, the nether world and all the quarters burst. (Demons) fearful with faces like those of horses, elephants, camels, cats, (so also those) having faces like those of tigers, lions, rats, having eyes like the lightning, (and) some having serpent-like hair, large bodies, some with sword-like nails, and others also ran and roared with the sound (like that) of the clouds. O king, that entire army, full of chariots, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers, and fearful due to the multitudes of amusements in the war shone at that time. Having got into the aeroplane which was a hundred yojanas extensive, to which crores of swans were yoked, which had a stream of a thousand grandeurs, which was filled with all things, Jālandhara quickly went (out). On the first day, he, with his armies, reached Mandara at mid-day. It was broken (into portions) by palanquin carriers and divided by many elephants. On the second day he, along with his army, reached Meru. That great army remained on the peak (called) Ilāvṛta.

34b-40a. Then the chief demons destroyed the Khāṇḍava, Nandana forest. The best demons shattered the peaks of Meru. The best demons, after having tied the couch-like swings to the *s*antāna trees, dallied with siddha women. The river on Meru was filled with saffron on the breasts, tāmbūlas, sandal, agaru (sandal) ornaments, and flowers dropped from the hair. The eastern side of that good Meru was shaken by his elephants. The chariots moved to the south and the warriors to the north and west. Then the demon Jālandhara made the demons set out. Others also, along with the sounds of drums, went to the Mahendra peak. Having destroyed the city of the king of kings, and of Yama and Varuṇa, so also (the cities) of other regents of quarters, they came to Amarāvatī.

40b-42. Then divine portents, so also portents in the sky, the earth and the atmosphere appeared. Much dust fell (down);

mass of darkness spread (out). Then the thunderbolt, being lustreless, fell down from Indra's hand. Seeing fearful omens, Indra said to Bṛhaspati: "What should we do, and whose refuge should we seek? See, the war is imminent."

43-45. Then Bṛhaspati spoke these words to the king of heaven: "Approach the feet of Viṣṇu living in Vaikuṇṭha." Indra, thus told by Bṛhaspati, went along with the gods to (Viṣṇu's) abode—Vaikuṇṭha—and quickly sought the refuge of (Viṣṇu) the enemy of Kaiṭabha. Vijayā, the doorkeeper, informed Viṣṇu (of his arrival). All gods, trembling through fear of Jālandhara, came (there).

Śrī said:

46-49. You who are fighting for gods, should not kill him, my brother. He, O god, should only be cursed and not be killed.

Hearing these words of Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu the protector of the three worlds, mounted upon Garuḍa that covered the sky (just) by the flapping of his wings. Hari quickly moved out of his Vaikuṇṭha abode and saw the gods trembling through the fear of Jālandhara and with their lustre lost. All the gods saw Viṣṇu resembling a dense cloud, and with his four hands adorned with the Śārṅga (bow), the conch, the mace and the lotus.

50-56a. Having recited a hymn of praise in front of (Viṣṇu) Indra said: "O god, Jālandhara, the son of the lord of the rivers has devastated the heaven." Hearing these words (of Indra) and having granted safety to the residents of heaven (i.e. the gods), (Viṣṇu) the destroyer of the demons, shone along with the gods to conquer the demon. Then Indra, holding the thunderbolt and getting into the chariot brought by Mātalin, went before Viṣṇu. All the gods were on the left side. He came from the left. (Agni) to whom the oblations are dear, seated on a ram, was on the southern side. Indra's son, Jayanta, mounted upon the elephant Airāvata, and Indra mounted upon (the horse) Uccaiḥśravas, and both (remained) in front of the lord. (There were) Dhātṛ, Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Indra, Vivasvat, Pūṣan, and the tenth was said to be Parjanya. Then Tvaṣṭṛ shone, so also Viṣṇu, the younger brother (of Indra).

56b-60. Thus these twelve Ādityas stood before Indra. Vīrabhadra, Śambhu, and the very glorious Giriśa, Ajaikapād, Ahirbudhnya, Pinākin who was (never) defeated, Bhuvanādhīśvara, Kapālin, Sthāṇu, and Bhaga, and Bhagavat, are said to be the eleven Rudras, O king, before him (also stood) the eight Maruts, viz. Śvasana, Sparśana, Vāyu, Anila, so also Māruta, Prāṇa, Apāna and Sajīva. Vivasvat also went among them with his ten forms. At that time Dhanada (i.e. Kubera), the lord of kinnaras, having got into a palanquin (also) went there.

61-67. The Rudras mounted on bulls, so also Māruta, being carried by a deer and having the weapons like tridents and iron clubs, went in front of the army. Gandharvas, cāraṇas, yakṣas, piśācas, snakes, guhyakas holding all weapons went in front of the army. The soldiers also crossed the eastern and western oceans. In it Hari, with the body (i.e. in the form) of a boar moved with a desire to kill the army of the demons, after he had speedily come from the heaven. The northern part of the Sumeru mountain was covered by the army of the gods. Having resorted quickly to the southern peak of the golden mountain, the wonderful huge army of Jālandhara remained. The battlefield remained day and night in the region of Ilāvṛta where it was arranged between Meru and Mandara (mountains). The demons, full of joy, quickly went to that region described as bringing victory by Śukra, so also the gods went to that region described (like that) by Bṛhaspati.

68-71. It was surrounded by excellant chariots, surges of elephants giving out the streams of rut resembling clouds. The land causing (the armies) move shone with innumerable horses and footsoldiers walking in front of Garuḍa. Then there was the great sound of the musical instruments of both the armies; so also the tumult of the warriors roaring at one another. Then a great war, causing fear, took place between the demons and the gods. There was the friction of the entire army like the destruction of the three worlds. Śruti (the sacred text) overpowered with fear, and much fatigued wept again and again. The battlefield was at that time filled with arrows concealing the forms of the chariots.

72-75. The Sky also, tossing the garment of dust, was horripilated. She (i.e. the Sky) was as it were crying through fear with

the loud notes of the birds. Then Indra ordered the clouds like Saṁvartaka. They, mounting upon tall elephants fought in the war. Gandharvas and kinnaras became the drivers of the horses of gods. Sādhyas and siddhas (became) chariot-fighters. Yakṣas and cāraṇas (became) elephant-riders. Serpents eating (i.e. living upon) air, so also kinnaras (became) the foot-soldiers. O king, the leader Yama (became) the chief of the diseases, viz. consumption.

76-81a. A fierce battle took place there between the demons and the diseases. The demons (struck by) diseases like acute pain and fever fell and rolled on the ground. The diseases struck by the demons dropped on the battlefield. Certain diseases fled to the mountains. There were natural herbs which rendered them free from trouble. With them the servants of Yama rendered (the soldiers) in the armies free from trouble. The groups of foot-soldiers among the demons killed all the foot-soldiers (among the army of the gods) with arrows, mallets and spears with sharp edges, sharp swords, and hatchets. Crores (of the warriors) with their bodies tawny due to blood killed one another. The quick horses threw up in the sky the horse-riders at that time. With their bodies tawny due to blood, they clung to one another, and struck one another.

81b-86. The fierce mass of the fighters from chariots covered the earth with streams of chariots. They pierced with sharp arrows discharged from the bows the great fighters from chariots. The elephants, with their temples emaciated due to rut, and being angry, knocked down the elephants after binding their trunks with their own trunks. Some demon lifting a chariot with his arms went to the sky. He knocked down on the ground the horse-riders, horses and elephants. Taking them on his shoulder he quickly went to Jālandhara. Someone, taking two elephants on his two sides, a third one on his belly and a fourth one on his head, runs (i.e. ran) on the battlefield. A demon, taking out his sword from the sheath and shaking the clear sky, went after knocking down thousands of gods on the battlefield.

87-88. A semidivine female able to fly, of stout breasts, lustful, slim-bodied, quickly came from the sky and took away a demon from the battlefield. She kissed his face fixed with sharp

arrows. Then Kālanemi, having bound the army of the gods, danced.

89-93. Then angry Viṣṇu went out to (attack) Kālanemi; Yama (went against) the hero Durvāraṇa, and Rāhu (against) the Moon and the Sun. God Vaiśvānara (went out to attack) Ketu, and Bṛhaspati went (out to fight with) Śukra. The restrained Aśvins went (out to attack) the demon Aṅgāraparṇaka. (Jayanta) Indra's son (went to attack) Saṁhrāda, and Kubera went (to attack) Nihrāda. Rudras surrounded Niśumbha and Vasus surrounded Śumbha in the war. Viśvedevas went (out to attack) Jāmbha who stood in the form of a cloud. Vāyus (went out to attack) Vajraroman, and Mṛtyu went (out to attack) Maya. Vāsava with the Śakti-missile in his hand, ran to Namuci who was distracted. The other gods also surrounded the demons matching them in valour.

CHAPTER SIX

Death of Demon Bala

Nārada said:

1-18a. When the duels in this way had commenced in many ways, the angry Viṣṇu struck Kālanemi with his mace. He, giving up his swoon (i.e. regaining consciousness) thought, and struck Viṣṇu with arrows. Then the angry Viṣṇu dropped him dead on the ground. O king, having reflected, Candramā (i.e. the Moon) struck Rāhu with a sword. Rāhu at that time leaving him ran to the Sun. Having vanquished the Sun in the battle, Rāhu ran to the Moon. The lord of the night (i.e. the Moon) struck him with a sword in the battle. Due to the hardness of the body of Rāhu the sword at that time was powdered. Rāhu struck him deeply with his hard fist. Having lifted up Candra (i.e. the Moon) he swallowed him speedily in the great war and again spat him out. He, putting his mark, the dear on his chest, dismissed him. That Rāhu, seizing (the horse) Uccaiḥśravas, took him to Jālandhara, and offered him to him (i.e. to

Jālandhara) with devotion. The angry Durvāraṇa struck Yama with a mace in the war. Saṁhrāda, pierced with sharp arrows by (Jayanta) the son of Indra seized Jayanta who fainted due to the stroke of the iron club, mounted upon Airāvata, and went to Jālandhara. Kubera also struck Nirhāda with his mace in the battle. The Rudras vigourously hit Niśumbha with the strokes of their spears. Niśumbha too very much harassed them with volleys of arrows. The demon Śumbha filled (i.e. covered) the hosts of gods with arrows. Maya, full of deceit, tied Yama with nooses, and took him (to Jālandhara). He gave him to Jālandhara, and Jayanta also to the Ocean. The Ocean too threw him into his mouth (so that) the world should be free from fear. Then Indra also, having tied Namuci with nooses, took him, the destroyer of the universe; then Jālandhara went. O king, a very fierce battle took place between Indra and Bala. The splendour from the body of Bala shone, like that of the Sun, in the ten directions. All the missiles of Indra were shattered on (striking) the body of Bala. The mighty Bala struck Indra with a mallet on his chest. Then Indra roared fiercely. Hearing that Bala laughed. From the mouth of him who was laughing, pearls dropped down. With a desire for (securing) his body, Indra did not fight.

18b-24. Then he very much praised Bala, the ocean of might. "O best among gods, ask for a boon." When told like this, Indra said to Bala: "O lord of the demons, if you are pleased, then (please) give your body to me." Hearing these words of Indra, that Bala also said: "Cutting me (i.e. my body) with weapons take me (i.e. my body)." Then he also (said): "What is that which cannot be (i.e. is not) given by the noble?" "Like speech to one who cannot hear, like a woman of fickle eyes to a blind man, like a garland of flowers to a dead man, wealth is fruitless to a miser. The noble ones do not seize their enemies though they harm. The Rivers also take their co-wives (i.e. other Rivers) to the Ocean. A good man, engaged in the welfare of the others, does not get perturbed even at the time of their destruction. The sandal tree, though cut, makes fragrant the mouth (i.e. the edge) of the axe. Even a divine body perishes, but not the wealth given to the good. That digit of the Moon alone, which is on the head of Śiva remains (intact). Those who show goodness to those

who harm them, are the good that are at the top of the earth. Even a wicked man loves them who for their own cause get their bodies cut off for those who have harmed them before." Saying, 'All right', Indra struck Bala with a mallet. Yet his hody did not split up. Indra became worried. Being reminded by Mātalin, he hit the body (of Bala) with his thunderbolt. Due to that stroke of the thunderbolt the body of Bala was shattered. A portion of Bala's body fell on thc golden mountain. Another (fell) upon the Himālaya. The third one fell upon the Go mountain. The fourth one (fell) into the divine river. The fifth one (fell) upon the Mandara (mountain). The sixth produced from the body of Vijaya fell into the mine of diamonds.

25-31. All the limbs of his body born pure, became the sources of gems due to the pure act. Particles of the bones fell from the thunderbolt. The hexagons became gems. From his eyes (dropped) sapphires. Rubies were produced from his ears, (so also) rubies were produced from his blood. Emeralds were produced from his marrow. From his tongue corals were produced. In the same way his teeth became pearls. Emeralds were produced from his marrow. So also emeralds were (also) produced from his nose. His excrement became bell-metal. His semen turned into silver. Copper was produced from his urine. From the unguent of his body brass came out, so also lustrous wealth. From his lsound lapis lzuli came out; so also more charming gems. Gold was produced from his nails. Mercury came out from his blood. Crystal was produced from his marrow. Corals were produced from his flesh. The gems were (thus) produced on the earth from the body of Bala. They are enjoyed by pure persons due to the wealth of the collection of their religious merit.

32-37. Meantime, having heard that Bala was killed in the battle by Indra, his queen named Prabhāvatī, went near (i.e. to) his (i.e. Indra's) feet. Seeing her husband with his limbs shattered in the battle, Prabhāvatī, full of tears, with her hair loose, of stout breasts, lamented: "O lord, O Bala, O you brave one, O you of a handsome body, O you dear to the world, why have you, abandoning me, gone to aloofness? Men do not cast their bodies, even on realising that they are full of old age, and leprosy; but O dear one, you have in vain cast your body; O dear one, by means of your divine body the string of pearls is adorned. O

dear one, untie the braid of me afflicted with the grief of widowhood, which you yourself, eager to fight, had tied." The Ocean's son, seeing the queen lamenting like this, and being afflicted, said to Śukra: "O Bhārgava, bring him back to life."

Śukra said:

38. He died willingly. How can I bring him back to life? Yet due to the power of the hymn he will utter words.

Jālandhara said:

39-42. O Bhārgava, I wish (to see Bala's) form (and) hear his words.

Being thus addressed by Jālandhara, he became engrossed in meditation. Then from his mouth sound pleasing the ears came out, addressing Prabhāvatī. It as it were came out from a musical instrument "O Prabhāvatī, unite your body with the parts of my body." Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, Prabhāvatī turned herself into a river. She got united with the parts of Bala's body, and flowed towards the east. Due to her water, excellent brilliance was produced in gems.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Lakṣmī Intervenes in the Fight between Viṣṇu and Jālandhara

Nārada said:

1-3a. Then Jālandhara who was angry, spoke to (Indra), the killer of the demon: "O you of a mean power, where will you go after killing Bala through trickery?" Speaking thus to Indra, that brave son of the Ocean, cut off, with arrows, his chariot along with the charioteer, horses and flag. Indra, wounded by the arrows, fell after fainting on (i.e. in) his chariot.

3b-9. Seeing that Indra had fallen down, the Ocean's son roared. Giving up his swoon (i.e. regaining consciousness), Indra discharged his thunderbolt against Jālandhara. Then holding a

piece of a mountain the Ocean's son held the thunderbolt at his side and quickly getting down his chariot, ran to Indra with a desire to seize him in the battle. Then, Indra, abandoning the chariot and remembering Viṣṇu, ran away. The arrogant son of the Ocean got into Indra's chariot, and making Mātalin the charioteer, went with his desire fulfilled. That mighty-armed Jālandhara went quickly like a cloud after getting into Indra's chariot (as he liked). Then, Viṣṇu through anger raised his sword (called) Nandaka in the battle, and inciting Garuḍa, having mind's speed, struck the army of the demons angrily. He, with force, knocked down chariots, horses, elephants and foot-soldiers in thousands.

10-12. Viṣṇu, surrounded (i.e. accompanied) by Kaśyapa's son performed a fierce feat in the battle. (The battlefield had become) a river, which carried hair, bones, marrow and stream of blood, which was resorted to by goblins, vampires and birds, which was filled with hands, thighs, shanks, missiles and weapons, which was very difficult to cross, which was resorted to by tigers and lordly elephants, which was adorned with blood, entrails, necklaces and armlets. Seeing the army which blocked the beautiful festival to the the rolling eyes, struck by Viṣṇu, all the excellent demons, obstructed Viṣṇu on all sides at the order of Jālandhara.

13-15. There those demons showered volleys of arrows, as clouds shower (water), as bees shower (i.e. moisten) a lotus, as the clouds shower a mountain (with water), or as hosts of birds shower (i.e. moisten) a mango-tree, or as a mass of incense showers (i.e. fills) the sky. In that danger of the battle, Viṣṇu was not visible, so also Garuḍa was not visible. All those great demons who had got into their chariots, roaring with fearful sounds, struck Viṣṇu with all weapons.

16-20. The angry enemy of the demons (i.e. Viṣṇu), with a fierce form, knocked down all of them in the war as wind knocks down a mass of leaves. Then the demon Śailaroman, angrily ran to Viṣṇu. Even the arrows of Viṣṇu were shattered on (i.e. after striking) his body. Śailaroman also struck with arrows the body of Viṣṇu who taking out his sword cut off his head. When the demon's head was cut off, his trunk, walking on the battlefield seized Garuḍa by his wings with his hands. His head

too quickly jumped and stuck fast to his shoulders. Then seeing the fighting of his face even Viṣṇu was amazed.

21-25a. Seeing the head stuck (to the shoulders), Garuḍa fell down on the ground. Again speedily flying, he resorted to the place of the head. Then the powerful Śailaroman snatched off Viṣṇu from Garuḍa. Viṣṇu struck him with the palm of his hand; and he fell dead on the ground. Then Jālandhara said to Khaḍgaroman, his charioteer: "Drive the chariot there, where god Viṣṇu is." By the words (i.e. the order) of Jālandhara, Khaḍgaroman took the chariot (to that spot). Seeing that Viṣṇu in front of him, the Ocean's son said: "O Viṣṇu, kill me fearlessly. I shall not kill you, O Mādhava."

25b-29. Hearing those words of him, Viṣṇu, with his eyes red due to anger, filled (i.e. covered) him with fatal arrows. The Ocean's brave son, with his body pierced by Viṣṇu, continuously covered Viṣṇu with streams (i.e. volleys) of arrows. Garuḍa, pierced by his hundreds of arrows, fell unconscious. Seeing Garuḍa fallen on the ground (after being struck) by the arrows of the Ocean's son, Viṣṇu was reminded of his chariot that stood in Vaikuṇṭha. That chariot, without a charioteer, (but) surrounded by horses, came to him. Seeing that chariot yoked with horses on the battlefield the lord was amazed.

30-34. Having brought Garuḍa to consciousness, he appointed him as its driver. That Viṣṇu, putting the crown on his head, the Kaustubha gem on his chest, and prompting the horses to exert, went up to Jālandhara. With (other) gods, he tore the earth with the chariot's wheel(s); he quickly struck the army of the demons with (his) arrows. Ordered by the lord of gods, Fire burnt the demon's army (as he was) aided by Wind. At that time, the lord, along with the gods, destroyed the army of the demons. Seeing his army of which a small portion was left, Jālandhara thought, and then (he) the king said to Śukra:

35-39. "When (even) you, well-versed in incantations, were there, the gods destroyed my army. You are well-known for your lore. O brāhmaṇa, what is the use of the lore which does not protect those who are afflicted with diseases, and what is the use of that kṣatra power which does not protect those seeking refuge?" Hearing the words of Jālandhara, Śukra said to

him: "O king, (now) see the power of me, a brāhmaṇa." Saying so, he touched them with water (i.e. sprinkled water over them, and) roused them with the 'hum' sound. They were (thus) roused by Śukra. The Ocean's son struck the gods with fatal arrows, and they fell in the battle all around. O king, with their bodies shattered by arrows, they sustained their life. They, pierced by arrows, did not die because of their immortality, O best one.

40-45a. Then god Viṣṇu said to Bṛhaspati: "O preceptor of gods, fie upon the power of you who are not bringing the gods back to life." Bṛhaspati then immediately said to the lord of the world (i.e. Viṣṇu): "O lord, by means of the herbs I shall bring the gods back to life." Speaking like this, Bṛhaspati too went to the mountain Droṇa, lying in the ocean; and comfortably taking the herbs (from the mountain), Bṛhaspati, by using them, brought the gods back to life. Then the gods who rose, killed the army of the demons. Seeing the gods to have risen, the Ocean's son (Jālandhara) said to Śukra: "O Śukra, how did they get up without your lore?" Hearing these words spoken by the demon, Śukra said to the Ocean's son:

45b-48a. "There is a great mountain named Droṇa, that lies in the ocean. There are herbs there, which bring the dead back to life. The preceptor of gods (Bṛhaspati), having gone there, and having taken the herbs (from there), rouses, with an incantation, the gods killed in the battle." Hearing what Śukra said, Jālandhara, having entrusted the responsibility of his army to Śumbha, went to the Ocean.

48b-54. Having gone into the Ocean of Milk, he entered a divine, very bright house and saw there the pleasure-chamber of the Ocean of Milk. In it neither hot nor cold breezes (blew). Darkness was not noticed there. There excellent females, rich with the burden of breasts, having slim bellies and good teeth, sang, danced and sported. The sportive females served there by casting amorous glances, moving to and fro, with fascinating bodies, by means of lovely movements of their creeper-like arms, and the sounds of their steps, with sweet words and eulogies, by giving the pleasure of fragrance, with the hummings of the bees in the form of their eyes, by sportively moving the chowries, with garlands, and smiling glances. Having gone there

the Ocean's son who was eager to fight and seeing the Ocean of Milk sporting there, saluted the Ocean of Milk, and said to him: "O uncle, you are killing me. With the water inundate (Bṛhaspati) under the pretext of the herbs from the Droṇa mountain."

The Ocean of Milk said:

55-61. O son, how shall I inundate with my waves him who has sought my refuge? The best sages do not praise him who abandons him who has sought his refuge.

Hearing the words of his paternal uncle, the king of the demons continuously, angrily, struk the (Droṇa) mountain with the soles of his feet. Then, O king, mountain Droṇa who was very much afraid of Jālandhara, came, in his (original) form to Jālandhara, and said to him: "I have become your servant. Protect me who have sought your refuge. O you of great arms, by your order I shall (even) go to lower region. I shall stay (there) till you rule the kingdom." Accompanied by the cry of the herbs and the weeping of the siddhas, the (Droṇa) mountain went to the lower region, (even) when the Ocean's son was observing. Then the hero Jālandhara came to the great battle-field. Having got into the chariot already made ready, he went to Viṣṇu. The son of the River (i.e. Jālandhara) seeing Viṣṇu seated in the chariot, laughed loudly. (He said to him:)

62-69. "Wait in your chariot till I kill (other) enemies." Speaking like this, he quickly struck the army of gods. The gods rent by (his) arrows, said to Bṛhaspati: "Protect (us)." Then Bṛhaspati quickly went to the Ocean of Milk. O king, not seeing (the mountain) Droṇa (there) he became very anxious. Then Bṛhaspati, having quickly come (back) to the battlefield, said to the gods: "O gods, all of you run away. The Droṇa mountain has perished." Of Bṛhaspati who was speaking like this, the Ocean's son, laughing at the gods, cut off the sacred thread and hair with sharp arrows. Then Bṛhaspati afflicted through fear to his life speedily ran away. O king, all gods (also) leaving the battlefield, fled. Having thus made the gods flee, he ran to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu also, eager to fight, ran to the lord of demons.

Then a fierce battle took place between Viṣṇu and Jālandhara. Dreadful by means of his volleys of arrows he overcame Viṣṇu.

70-74. Cutting to pieces those arrows and filling (i.e. covering) him with arrows, mighty Viṣṇu, harassed the demon Jālandhara with arrows. Jālandhara, with his body injured by the arrows, abandoned his chariot, and quickly ran to Viṣṇu standing in the battle to vanquish him. Seeing him coming, Viṣṇu pierced him with arrows. He bore the arrows of Viṣṇu on his body and came near his chariot. Whirling repeatedly Garuḍa with one hand and Viṣṇu's chariot with the other (hand), he dropped them on the Śveta-dvīpa. Garuḍa, thrown from Jālandhara's hand, also fell down. For a long time he took rest in Krauñca-dvīpa only. Viṣṇu, freeing himself from the whirling chariot, came to the battlefield, and said to the lord of demons: "Wait, wait."

75-78. The Ocean's son who liked fighting, seeing Viṣṇu who had again come to the battlefield, covered the ground with arrows and roared. Viṣṇu quickly pierced the demon on his chest with a (missile called) śakti that was throbbing. He (then) fell down. His son (then) took him from the battlefield to his residence, and said to him: "Oh, who has made me void of shame?" Then a great fight between (Viṣṇu) the enemy of the demons and Jālandhara, standing on the ground, took place there. Viṣṇu did not kill the demon out of his love for Lakṣmī; (but) himself fell down (struck) by his arrows.

79-83. Then seeing Viṣṇu fallen on the ground, the Ocean's son, took him and got into his own chariot. Then Lakṣmī, dear to Viṣṇu, came weeping to him. Lakṣmī stood there. Seeing her husband, having eyes like lotuses, fallen, Lakṣmī said to the Ocean's son: "O brother, listen to (my) words. You have vanquished and held Viṣṇu. O you of great power, it is not proper for you to bestow widowhood on your sister." Hearing her words, he released the lord of the world (i.e. Viṣṇu). (Then) Jālandhara, of mighty arms, devoutly saluted his sister (i.e. Lakṣmī). Then he quickly saluted Viṣṇu's feet through his love for his sister. Viṣṇu said to Jālandhara: "I am pleased with your act. O lord of demons, ask for a boon. Which boon shall I grant to you?"

Jālandhara said:

84-86. O Viṣṇu, if you are pleased with this (act of) valour of me, then you should stay with Lakṣmī, at my father's abode.

Saying, 'All right', the lord of the earth, remembered (i.e. thought of) Garuḍa (and on his arrival) mounted upon him and (went) to the Ocean of Milk with his wife (Lakṣmī). Since then Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu) lives in his father-in-law's house. The lord of the gods desiring to do what is dear to Lakṣmī, lives in the ocean.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conditions During Jālandhara's Rule

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Nārada, tell me what Jālandhara, the Ocean's son, did after having made the gods flee in the battle, and after having put Viṣṇu in his own abode.

Nārada said:

2-8a. Having given gifts due to being pleased to the heroes like Śumbha, Jālandhara went to heaven, and having reached it saw that the trees constantly bore fruits by decorating men every-day with the shower of gold. It is the fruit of the horse-sacrifice. Those noble ones who give an elephant, a garment, gold, a cow, a girl (in marriage), sesamum-seeds, flowers, camphor, tāmbūla, musk and saffron, see Amarāvatī. (They see Amarāvatī) by giving a house (i.e. a shelter) in the rainy season, fire (i.e. warmth) in the cold season. They play upon all the musical instruments in Śiva's temple. Those who put up stalls where water is distributed to travellers in Caitra (see Amarāvatī). In that city the swings with couches swing on their own. There sārikās, parrots, swans, wandering bees and cuckoos act as messengers and bring about the union with the dear.

8b-12. There are, O Rāma, (the celestial nymphs like) Rambhā, Menakā, Tilottamā, Suṣamā, Sundarī, Ghṛtācī, Pañjikasthalī, Sukeśī, Sumukhī, Rāmā, Mañjughoṣā and Mālinī; (so also) Mṛgodbhavā, Sukhadā, Dhanadaṁṣṭrā, Tilaprabhā, that cause (men) to receive the fruits of the Aśvamedha sacrifices, and give the fruits of the Rājasūya sacrifices. The celestial nymphs that were sinless, sported there in crores. The son of the Ocean established the demon Śumbha, (dear to him) like his own life in the heaven like this. Having come (back) from the heaven, and having consecrated Niśumbha as the heir-apparent, Jālandhara, due to his own might ruled for a couple of arbuda years (i.e. for two hundred million years).

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

13-14. He fought with the gods in the battle with them. He was not defeated by the gods. What did the brave son of the Ocean do after that? Tell all that in detail to me who desire to listen to it.

Nārada said:

15-17. O king, listen properly to what the Ocean's son did: Having conquered the gods in the battle, he ruled without any trouble. Gandharvas like Citrasena waited upon the lord of the demons. The lord of the demons also enjoyed the shares in the sacrificial offerings. The mighty one snatched away all the wealth and also other (objects) after having vanquished (the gods).

18-26. O king, when the Ocean's son was ruling over the earth, no human being died, and nobody would go to hell. There was no other waste than (in) enjoyment. There was no unfortunate barren woman. There no ugly, distressed, wicked or notorious woman was seen. There was no widow, nor was there a poor man. Everywhere there were donors and no recipients. Meritorious persons gave their wealth to brāhmaṇas. In every house the women were endowed with beauty and youth. There were cow's milk, curd, and ghee. Men there were without old age. All were happy, there was nowhere bondage by means of fetters. Killing was not done by an arrow. Nobody harassed anybody else. Debt was not seen (to be incurred); O king, everywhere there were rich people. O king, the subjects were contented, and rich with all crops. In the

houses of men there was the milky juice which was taken out from plantains and sugarcanes and which was very sweet. A man listened to the beneficial words of a woman and a man. There was no one who robbed (people) passing along the way. The streams fall continuously from the sky, so they get mixed with Karmāra(?) ghee and with sugar and are heard to have fallen into the people's mouths just by recollecting the Ocean's son.

CHAPTER NINE

The Creation of a New Powerful Weapon by Śiva

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O best brāhmaṇa, what did Indra and other gods, vanquished by Jālandnara, do then, when the kingdom of the heaven was snatched (by him)?

Nārada said:

2-7. The gods, having abandoned heaven, met with a bad condition. They (had) neither ambrosia, nor (the portions in the offerings made at) sacrifices. They went to the place of the Self-born (Brahmā). In Brahmā's house they saw Brahmā, Parameṣṭhin, who had engaged his mind through suspension of his breath in the Supreme Soul. All the careful gods praised him with true words. Then the lord who was pleased, said: "What should I do?" Then the gods again told Brahmā, all (the acts) of Jālandhara, and (about) their own defeat. Thinking for a moment, Brahmā along with the gods went to Kailāsa. They, full of surprise, remained by the side of Kailāsa; and the gods, led by Brahmā and Indra praised (Śiva): "Salutation to you, Bhava, Śarva, Nīlagrīva. Salutation to you, Sthūla, Sūkṣma, Bahurūpa (having many forms)."

8-11a. Śiva, turning his face to all sides, and having heard (these) words, said to Nandin: "Quickly bring the gods (here)." Hearing the words of Śiva, Nandin quickly called the gods. The

gods having entered the inner apartment, with their eyes full of wonder, saw there, seated on a seat, Śiva who conferred happiness on the world, who was waited upon by crores of devout attendants who were greyish due to dust.

11b-15a. Having first, along with the gods, saluted him, the grandsire (i.e. Brahmā) said: "Since this Indra had a malady he has foolishly come here. O great god, to whom those who seek his refuge, are dear, favour (us)." Then having heard the loud laughter of the Trident-holder (i.e. Śiva), Brahmā said to the lord of gods: "See the condition of the residents of heaven." Then the lord of all, the highest god (Śiva) having known the desire of Brahmā's (i.e. in Brahmā's) mind, and having known Indra's insult for the sake of gods, and being affectionately requested by Pārvatī, spoke (these) words, O king:

15b-18. "How can I kill that enemy who is not killed by Viṣṇu? O grandsire, the weapons like the thunderbolt have been fashioned in olden times. That demon Jālandhara would not at all be killed with those weapons. Even I cannot kill him with weapons fashioned in olden times. Let gods fashion a weapon bearing my energy and strong." Having heard this reply of Śiva, Brahmā said to him: "You (please) fashion the great weapon. You know your own power."

19-23. Hearing these words of him, Śiva spoke to him: "O Brahman, with gods you discharge your lustre united with wrath." Then Brahmā, the teacher of the Brahmāstra (Brahmā's missile), discharged (his) lustre. Then Rudra (i.e. Śiva) himself discharged the lustre produced in his three eyes. All gods also angrily discharged a mass of lustres. In the meantime, Viṣṇu who was remembered by Śiva, came (there). Śiva, who was addressed by him, 'What should I do?' spoke to Viṣṇu: "O Viṣṇu, why was Jālandhara not killed by you in the war? How is it that leaving the gods you have gone to the Ocean of Milk, for lying there?"

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

24-25. O lord of gods, if I kill him, how (can I say) Lakṣmī is dear to me? Therefore, O you, husband of Pārvatī, you (should) kill Jālandhara in a battle.

Viṣṇu who was told by Śiva, 'Discharge your lustre due to anger', discharged the lustre of Viṣṇu (i.e. his own lustre) and all that increased. Seeing the lustre to have increased and to have become extensive, (Śiva) spoke to Viṣṇu:

Śiva said:

26-29. Please fashion my missile with this lustre.

Hearing those words of Śiva, Viśvakarman and others, looking at one another, thought: 'What should we do?' Seeing them to be silent, and knowing what was in their mind, Brahmā said: "The deities cannot bear your lustre which they are unable to look at. Who can curb your lustre?" Then jumping over the lustre, lord Śiva danced by roving in all directions with the hinder part of his left foot.

30-38. Then gods like Indra and others, seeing Śiva dancing over the lustre, joyfully sounded musical instruments. Since then, in dances roving in all directions is practised. Then due to the crushing caused by Śiva's dance, a disc was produced, which had three lakhs of spokes, and which was full of a crore of bones. Due to being crushed by the foot of Śiva, particles went out from the lustre. And with that Viśvakarman fashioned a missile and aeroplanes. O king, the ageless gods, seeing that Sudarśana disc, said, through fear, to the lord of gods: "Protect us, protect us." The earth received hardness due to the bright metals. The sheath that was fashioned by Viśvakarman was reduced to ash. With that weapon which was fashioned, Kāla, being burnt, fell on the ground. Then Śiva gave that disc into Brahmā's hand. The lord of Umā, Śiva, seeing that the beard (of Brahmā) was burnt by the masses of lustre from the disc, laughed, and quickly taking it (back) from Brahmā's hand, kept it under his arm-pit, as a poor man keeps a treasure. Then, the disc, remaining under the arm-pit of Śiva was not seen, as the fruit of the gift which is given by a great fool.

CHAPTER TEN

Jālandhara's Messenger Rāhu Meeṭs Śiva

Nārada said:

1. After this, having gone to the Ocean's son, I told him: "O best among all heroes, Śiva has made a vow to kill you."

Jālandhara said:

2. O great sage, is there a collection of gems in the house of the Trident-holder? Tell me all about that. No war takes place without a desire (to get something).

Nārada said:

3-7. Ash is (applied) to his body; his bull (i.e. his vehicle) is old; there are serpents on his body; there is poison in his throat; in his hand there is a begging bowl. Gajānana and Ṣaḍānana (i.e. Kārtikeya) are his two sons. Such is his wealth. What is different (from this) you should know from me: (His wife is) the daughter of the lord of mountains. She is noble and has raised breasts. The lord, though he has burnt Cupid, is fascinated by her beauty. Maheśa (i.e. Śiva) has always a desire to amuse her. Śiva dances and sings and (thus) causes her to laugh. She is well-known as Pārvatī. She is the divine limit of beauty. O king, beautiful Vṛndā and these celestial nymphs do not have (i.e. are not equal to) even a sixteenth part of Pārvatī.

8-11. Speaking like this to the intolerant Jālandhara, I disappeared in a moment when all the demons were watching. Then that son of the Ocean sent Rāhu as his messenger. Reaching Kailāsa in a moment, he saw the abode of the god. In the meanwhile, Viṣṇu, taking leave of the fierce Śiva, went unnoticed and quickly to the Ocean of Milk for fear of (being charged with) treachery. Rāhu saw the extremely bright abode of Śiva. Looking at (i.e. thinking to) himself he, being very much amazed, said (to himself): 'What is this?'

12-13. Desiring to enter, he was stopped at the door by the doorkeepers. When, though prohibited, he tried (to enter) they

raised their weapons. Having turned away those attendants (of Śiva), Nandin said to Rāhu: "O you low fellow, who are you? Why have you come here? What is your mission? Tell (about) your mission, so that these fearful attendants would not kill you."

Rāhu said:

14-17. I am Jālandhara's messenger. You take me to Śiva. O doorkeeper, the object of the great king (Jālandhara) is not to be told to the intermediaries.

Having heard the words of the messenger, Nandin came to Nīlalohita (i.e. Śiva). Having saluted Śaṅkara (after prostrating himself) like a staff, and standing before him, he said to him: "O great king, the son of Siṁhikā (i.e. Rāhu) is standing at the door with some mission. You may order whether he should go or come (to you)." The great god (i.e. Śiva) having heard the words of Nandin, quickly dismissed from the inner chamber, Pārvatī who had slept there and who was surrounded by her friends.

18-22. Then he said to his doorkeeper: "O Nandin, show in the messenger." Then, holding the messenger by his hand, the very mighty Nandin brought him (in and) showed him Śiva (seated) in the midst of gods. Then Rāhu saw Śiva who had put on the sacred thread of a serpent, who was without goddess (Pārvatī), who was adorned with a crescent moon on his head, who was served by the group of serpents giving out breath (i.e. hissing), who was accompanied by all gods, (and) who was waited upon by crores of attendants. Knowing that the messenger had come, Śiva looked and said: "Speak (out)." Then Rāhu commenced speaking.

Rāhu said:

23-30. O lord, I have been sent by Jālandhara to you. O Śiva, having heard his words (i.e. his message) through my mouth, do quickly (what he tells you). O Giriśa (i.e. Śiva), you are practising penance. You are qualityless. You are without religious merit. You have neither a father nor a mother. You are without wealth or a family. This mighty-armed Jālandhara

enjoys the three worlds. You too are under his control. Therefore, do as (you are) told. How is it that you who are the ancient god, are lustful and ride a bull?

When he was speaking like this, the two sons (of Śiva) Kārtikeya and Gajānana came (there). At that time, the god of gods was massaging his body with his hands. Due to his hands being tossed about, Vāsuki fell on the ground. Then the serpent (i.e. Vāsuki) seized the tail of the mouse, the vehicle of Gajānana. Seeing his vehicle seized, he said: "Leave it, leave it." In the meanwhile, seeing the agitated vehicle, of a large note, of Skanda, Vāsuki ejected, through his fear, the tail of the mouse, which he had seized; and then mounting upon Śiva's body, he encircled his neck and remained there.

31-35. Due to its heat, the crescent moon remained in the forest of his matted hair. She (i.e. the crescent moon) then became wet, and bathed his body (with) ambrosia; the row of the skulls on Śiva's head was brought back to life. (And) it recited all the sacred texts in due order, which it had formerly studied. The heads, hearing recital (of the sacred text) done by one another, discussed it (i.e. started its discussion). "I am the first, I am before (you). I am the greatest, I am the creator. I am the protector." In this way they eagerly bewailed one another: "I did not give gifts; I did not enjoy (pleasures); I did not offer oblations into fire. Due to my mind seized with grief, I did not give wealth to a brāhmaṇa."

36-38. Then a great attendant of the lord, with a mass of twisted hair, appeared (there). He had three faces, three eyes, three tails and seven hands. He was the great (attendant) by name Kīrtimukha, having matted hair. Seeing him that row of the skulls remained as it were dead through fear. Then that attendant Kīrtimukha said in front of the lord Śiva, after saluting him: "O lord, I am very much hungry." Then Śaṅkara told him: "O, eat those who are killed in the battle."

39-43. That attendant thought for a moment; and not seeing the battle anywhere, went to eat Brahmā, but was warded off by Śiva. Then Kīrtimukha who was hungry and who was fully warded off, ate up all his own body. Seeing that rash act and the devotion of Kīrtimukha, the lord, being pleased, said to

him: "Always stay in my palace. He who, living in my house, has no thought about you, will quickly fall down." He who was addressed thus, vanished. At that time gods showered flowers on the head of Śiva.

44-51. Seeing such a wonder in the assembly of the Trident-holder (i.e. Śiva) Rāhu too, being amazed, again spoke to the lord of gods: "How do passions touch you who are restrained and a meditating saint? How are you honoured by the sense-organs? How are you reached by the objects of senses? You fully accept the worship of (i.e. offered by) the regents of the quarters like Brahmā etc. (But) you do not look (up) to any god; you do not worship any god. You are the lord; (then) how do you live in the world eating whatever is obtained by begging? O lord of the meditating saints, you are protecting beautiful Pārvatī. Give her to me. Now, along with your sons Kārtikeya and Gajānana, you, taking a begging bowl, go from house to house every day." In this way Rāhu spoke (words of) various types to the lord. The lord too, hearing them, did not give any reply. Leaving the lord who was silent, Rāhu said to Nandin: "You who have a hideous, round face are the minister and the general of the army (of Śiva). You deserve to (i.e. you should) teach him who has thus deviated from right conduct. Otherwise, due to (this) sin he will, struck in the battle, fall like Indra."

52-53. Hearing these words of him, Nandin respectfully spoke to the lord, and then understanding the view of the Trident-holder (i.e. Śiva) from the sign (of the knitting) of his eyebrows Nandin, the chief among the attendants (of Śiva) honoured Rāhu, and sent him (back). Then having gone to Jālandhara, Rāhu told his (i.e. Śiva's) account and (about) the charming form of Pārvatī.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Śiva's Attendants Fight the Demons Off

Nārada said:

1-4a. Then valorous Jālandhara, having heard the words of his messenger, called his entire army, and made a march (against Śiva). Then the sound of the armies that had gathered (there) was heard. It awakened the kinnaras resting, along with their wives, in the caves of Mandara. It made rise the elephants having echoes in the caves of Meru and Mandara. The flocks of lions lost their way ahead. Thus the din of the great army deafened the three worlds. Then, O king, in the seat of Jālandhara there was the sound of drums. Due to that great sound, dear to the brave, the high mountains trembled and the palaces shook.

4b-8a. From the interior of the seven oceans the daityas and dānavas (i.e. the demons) moved out. They being ready and endowed with various vehicles roared. The neighings of the horses and great sounds were (heard) outside and in front. The earth (as it were) pleased with the wheels (of the chariot) moved. With the herds of elephants that were driven the earth along with the forest was blocked up by the myriads of fierce (warriors) urged on by Jālandhara and remaining in the chariots. There were two thousand hundred millions of horses and one hundred millions of elephants. An army consisting of one lakh chariot-warriors shone (there) and ninety crore parārdhas of chief leaders were seen.

8b-13a. The huge army, covering the sun with umbrellas moved out. At places the lotus-ponds were yellowish like gold. At places blue lotuses appeared due to the peacocks' keeping off the sun. At places the clouds appeared to rise due to the masses of dust when he marched. At places due to the cloths of the banners the sky was full of banners and umbrellas; the quarters were full of chowries when the army of the demons moved on. Then the demon Jālandhara was eager to march. Putting the (missile called) Śakti, decorated with many gems, he came to great Viṣṇu, living in the Ocean, to inquire (i.e. to take his leave). Having saluted Viṣṇu, Jālandhara said these words: "O my sister's husband, what should I give you for enjoyment? Tell me (that)"

13b-16a. Hearing these words of Oceans's son, Viṣṇu, being delighted, said: "What should I do as desired by and dear to the Ocean's son?" Thus addressed, he, being delighted, quickly replied to Viṣṇu: "I am going to the battlefield. You live here happily in the Ocean." There he was given sacred grains by Lakṣmī, and was honoured by Viṣṇu. Moving out from Viṣṇu's place, he came to the Ocean to inquire (i.e. to take his leave).

16b-22. Having saluted the Ocean, he said: "O father, I am going away to conquer Śiva in the battle. Please allow me." Hearing the words of his son who was going to (march against) Śiva, the lord of oceans also said to him: "O son, leave that ascetic (alone). Enjoy the kingdom given by me, and leave the ascetic away. Your valour is very wonderful; there is no king like you. You have made the earth superior to heaven. The earth shines in your kingdom as in Vaikuṇṭha. The god, unconquerable by demons, whom you have brought (lives here) with Lakṣmī. O child, live by me. Leave alone that mendicant, Śiva." (Though) told like this by the Ocean, he (i.e. Jālandhara), having attachment for Pārvatī, disregarded his father's words, and came to his own soldiers. Vṛndā spoke to Jālandhara who was ready to fight.

Vṛndā said:

23-28. O lord of kings, you should not fight with the condemned meditating saint. Turning away your mind going to Pārvatī, look at (i.e. think of) her. Why do you long for Pārvatī? Is Pārvatī superior to me? The poor one is without any support. She is always attached to Śiva. She longs for a son. She is barren. So she is a doll. In vain was she praised by Nārada. Give up (thoughts about) her, and enjoy me."

Hearing these words of Vṛndā, the Ocean's son (i.e. Jālandhara) replied: "Without seeing Pārvatī's beauty my mind will not turn back. O Vṛndā, you look after the country and the capital. O angry woman, you should always remember me, if Śiva kills me." Hearing these words of her husband, Vṛndā, laughing, went, after getting into a palanquin, to the seat of Jālandhara.

Nārada said:

29-40. Then the very mighty son of the Ocean proceeded to

Kailāsa. He was surrounded by sixty thousand mahāpadma soldiers. In the meanwhile, Śiva, leaving Kailāsa, went, along with his attendants, his sons and his dear wife, to (that part of) Kailāsa to the north of the Mānasa (lake). Then on the first day Jālandhara reached Kailāsa. Setting his army there, he was eager to see Kailāsa. There the breezes to which the masses of the divi ne filaments and the pollen of mandāra (flowers) had resorted, and which were broken by the showers of the sprays of cold drops, blew. Charming breezes, high like the stout breasts of the siddha women, and rich with the honey of mandāra, blew there. Seeing there the planting of their feet by ladies bright and glossy like the aśoka(-flowers), the lord of the demons became full of the sexual desire. The gods there delighted at seeing their own reflections were pleased. There, the mandāra (trees) with their sprouts withered, shone everywhere, after having manifested the coitus of the kinnara lovers. There the groves of many trees were occupied by the attendants of Śambhu. They appeared to be as it were well sustained by king Cupid. There the swarms of bees intoxicated by the fragrance of sandal and musk appeared like the charcoals of the burnt Cupid, that were put out. There, I think, having seen the entire beauty of the charming ladies, the friend of (i.e. resembling) excellent beauty, musk gave up the amusement of its mind, and plunged into blackness. At places there were lotuses shining like excellent red chalk. At places there were buds moving from their stems resembling the cloveshoot. At places there were bracelets shining like rafts on the mountain-streams. At places there were bees bowing through the humility of the nicula (a kind of reed) blossoms. At places there were fresh mango blossoms, burst and affected by cuckoos. At places there were the strong roots of the śāli rice, resorted to by herds of deer. At places there were groves sanctified by the extremely beautiful young married divine ladies, which caused a change even in the minds of sages.

41-45. On seeing the abode of Śiva, having these qualities, and the beautiful Kailāsa, the abode of all gems, the demon who was extremely amazed, said to Śukra (the son of Bhṛgu): "O dear one, why do (people) like you call him a sage whose wife is (so beautiful) like that and whose house is so charming?" Not seeing Śiva there, he asked (Śukra): "O Śukra, where has Śiva

gone? How is it that he has gone due to my fear? (i.e. has he gone through my fear)?" Thus asked, Śukra said: "The great god, lord Śiva, has gone to that (part of the) great mountain to the north of Mānasa. Others cannot go there." Hearing these words of Śukra, the very mighty demon said:

Jālandhara said:

46-49. I shall go to the lord of gods. You go first, O Śukra.

Saying so he went where Śiva himself remained. The son of the Ocean saw that excellent (part of) the mountain to the north of the Mānasa (lake). Its height was sixty thousand yojanas. That (part of) the mountain called Mānasa was, O king, surrounded by the army of the demon (Jālandhara). Many lordly demons quickly went up the mountain. There was, all round, darkness due to the umbrellas. There was a tremor due to the sound of the musical instruments. The din of their army filled the heaven and the earth.

Nārada said:

50-60. Seeing the huge army that came there, the lord kept Pārvatī, surrounded by her friends, on a very high peak of the mountain. Lord Śiva was surrounded by all his attendants who were ready (to fight) and were maddened by the fighting (spirit), so also by pramathas (i.e. the goblins attending upon Śiva) numbering thirty thousand mahābjas. Śiva said to Nandin, the chief of the attendants: "You should kill the brave, great demon Jālandhara, in the battle. Being surrounded by brave (warriors) like Mahākāla and others you go (to the battlefield). In the battle, you should fight very bravely as long as my enemy is not conquered, O hero." Hearing these words of Śiva, he said to his charioteer: "O very intelligent Kākatuṇḍa, bring my chariot today (i.e. now)." Hearing the words of Nandin, he too brought the chariot. That chariot used in battles, to which thirty-two horses were yoked, which had sixteen wheels, which had sixty flags, which was thirty yojanas long, which was full of all weapons, came (there). Śiva ordered his two sons, Kārtikeya and Gajānana to protect Nandin's troops. They were ready with their vehicles. Nandin was surrounded by the attendants. Nandin,

having honoured the lord with words, got into his chariot, and went out to (fight with) the demons. On his head shone an umbrella (of the measure) of twelve yojanas. When that Nandin went out, the demons first climbed up the mountain. The fierce-looking demons, fell on the ground.

61-68. The demons, being struck by the attendants left the mountain (and went) far away. Then coming down like smoke from the mountain the attendants struck the very powerful demons with sharp weapons. Seeing the (mountain) filled with the divinities, the demon-soldiers blocked it up. Then a great war of the attendants took place with the demons. A fierce shower of arrows was (sent by) the demons and gods. Then, the very mighty Kākatuṇḍa and others, with fire-like faces, killed all the elephants in the battle, so also (they destroyed) chariots and (killed) horses and footsoldiers. With the loudly laughing and fearful heads of the hosts of very deceitful demons killed (in the battle), the sky was filled. So also with lions, with hair let loose, having tawny faces, fierce fangs and eyes, and cutting off trunks, shanks, thighs, waists and backs. Everywhere the earth was filled with trunks tawny due to blood. Then, a very great noise was made by the lordly demons who were running in chariots, and whose soldiers were knocked down, like that of the oceans roaring at the time of the end of a yuga (i.e. the end of the world).

CHAPTER TWELVE

Śiva Arrives on the Battlefield

Nārada said:

1-6a. Seeing the demon-army killed by the attendants led by Nandin, the demons Śumbha and others, getting angry, went to (fight with) the attendants (of Śiva). Then the great demon Śumbha fought with Nandin. Niśumbha (fought with) Mahākāla, and Kāla with Lokeśvara in the battle. Śailaroman fought with

Puṣpudanta, and Mahābala with Mālyavat. Due to the power of illusion, O king, there was a din on the battlefield. Bhayānaka ran to Caṇḍa, and Rāhu to Skanda (i.e. Kārtikeya). Sarparoman (ran) to Kūṣmāṇḍa, and Gharghara to Madana. Ketumukha went to kill Śubha, and Jambha (went to kill) Vināyaka. Pātālaketu (rushed to kill) Hāsa, and Romakaṇṭaka (rushed to kill) Bhṛṅgīśa. The attendants of Rudra and the demons in crores fought with one another.

6b-19a When the lords of both of them were watching, the attendants and the demons, striking hard, struck (one another) with arrows. Nandin discharged those arrows as a great shower would (fall) on a mountain. Then he filled the face of Śumbha with arrows as wind fills the cave of Mandara with the masses of leaves. Kumbha left his bow, and ran to him (getting down) from the chariot. He uprooted a mountain and struck with it on the chest of Nandin, and having crushed his chariot in the battle, that mountain fell on the ground as a mountain would fall on coming in contact with the thunderbolt. He fainted for a moment, (then) regaining consciousness, he ran speedily. Mahākāla was struck on the chest by Niśumbha with a mallet. Coming (to him) he struck the demon on his crown with a mace. Ignoring that stroke, that very mighty Niśumbha also seized him by his feet and the very mighty one whirling him from his palm, threw him and roared. Drinking (i.e. inhaling) the air from his mouth (i.e. his breath), he, who had been tawny due to blood, roared. Puṣpadanta was struck on his face with a fist by Śailaroman. He (i.e. Puṣpadanta) struck Śailaroman with a mace, and knocked him on the ground. Seeing him fallen on the ground, the very strong Giriketu struck with a mallet the very fierce Puṣpadanta. Then Puṣpadanta cut off Giriketu's head with a sword and ran taking with him the shield and the sword of Giriketu. (Giriketu's) head said to him, "Why do you go away, leaving me who desire to fight (with you)? Do you not feel ashamed of running when this body is deprived of the head?" Thus addressed by his head, the trunk of Giriketu seized Puṣpadanta by his feet, and cut (i.e. pierced) his belly with a sharp sword.

19b-29a. From the side a demon, very strong and having a hundred heads, went out. He had two hundred eyes and two hundred arms. His head, whirling round, came near his

trunk, O king. Seeing the head come, Puṣpadanta cut it off with his sword. Then (came) a demon named Bhūkampana, and a fearful demon by name Jvara. Then, O king, Puṣpadanta was crushed there by the two. That unbearable and very speedy Jvara troubled him. The attendant of Śiva (viz. Puṣpadanta) left the battle and trembling went to the mountain (Kailāsa). A great archer Kolāhala struck Mālyavat with three arrows on his shoulders, and Mālyavat (struck) the demon on his forehead. Kolāhala who was struck by Mālyavat with sharp weapons of various kinds, showing his dexterity, struck Mālyavat. That Mālyavat, the chief among the attendants, ignoring the pain caused by the weapon, took a huge rock and struck Kolāhala with it in the battle. From him Feverish Heat, named Jvalana came out. He was very fierce, had three heads, nine hands, nine feet, and was very tawny. That Feverish Heat deluded Mālyavat with his lustre. Mālyavat, being subdued, left the battle and went to the mountain. In the battle Caṇḍi was struck with a strong noose on his chest. His horse went out (of the battlefield); from him he was hurled into the ocean.

29b-38a. In the battle Kārtikeya hit Rāhu with sharp arrows. Having covered him with volleys of arrows, he quickly discharged (the missile called) Śakti. Seeing the Śakti, burning as it were with lustre, coming to him, Rāhu flew into the sky and quickly seized it with both his hands. Seizing that Śakti, and roaring loudly, Rāhu struck him (i.e. Kārtikeya) with that same Śakti. Struck with that Śakti on his chest, a river went out of his body. In that battle, the son of Mahādeva (i.e. Kārtikeya) was washed by it. Somehow the river was checked; but a flood similarly went to the river. The Ocean's son, having heard from Jvara, the harsh cries of the mass of the (enemy's) army, did not remember even that melodious skilful note of the male cuckoo. Barbara killed with a sword Dahana (i.e. Agni) who was covering him with arrows. Sarparoman struck Kūṣmāṇḍa on his head with a fist. Pātālaketu struck Hāsa with a mallet. Taking it out from his body, the elephant bent the mallet. Pātālaketu hit him on his trunk with the stroke of his fist. Romakaṇṭaka wounded the lordly Bhṛṅgin with his weapons. The lordly Bhṛṅgin also being frightened, quickly went to the mountain from the battlefield.

38b-45. The white Dhūmravarṇa suddenly fell into the mouth of Ketu. The demon, of a large body and a large mouth, swallowed the attendant. When he was swallowed in the battle by Ketu, there was a very loud wailing. With the sharp arrows of Jṛbha, the body of Vināyaka was pierced. He cut off the trunk of that Gajānana. Then the mouse (the vehicle of Gajānana) also pierced with arrows entered a cave. In the battle Vināyaka afflicted with the stroke lamented, and was agitated. (He lamented:) "O mother, O father, O brother, O mouse dear to me." Hearing the cry of Gaṇeśa, the revered Pārvatī, coming (to Śiva) from another peak, said to Śiva at that time: "Gajānana is being killed by the demons. Kārtikeya also is knocked down. O Śiva, why are you sporting on the mountain. Protect your two sons and the attendants also. Today is the moment (i.e. the opportunity to use) the weapons like the trident always held by you." Then hearing the words of Pārvatī, Śiva said to Vīrabhadra: "Quickly make ready ready my bull (i.e. Nandin)."

46-52. When this was said, he did (like that) at that time. He fastened a diadem to his horns, which was lustrous like the sun. Having fastened a hundred bells round his neck, he put two mirrors on his ears. On his shoulders a mass of bells (was placed), and large anklets (were tied) to his feet. A thousand chowries were tied round his tail, and into his mouth (were placed) eight nooses. Then that auspicious goddess Ambikā, with the eight nooses and holding a sword, sat there (i.e. on the back of the bull) near Śiva. All the weapons were put (there, on his back). The bull was ready. With the string of her own bells, Pārvatī adorned him. The goddess also put a mark (on his face) and spoke to him after honouring him: "O best among the bulls, you should never leave Śiva in the dangerous battle. You should come (back) with Śiva after having vanquished the enemies in the battle." Hearing these words of the goddess, Śiva, adorned with his own ornaments, holding a thousand weapons, mounted upon his bull. With respect he spoke to that Pārvatī: "I am going to the battlefield."

The lord said:

53-57. With a desire for your own forms, you can remain even alone; for the demons, having a bad intention about ladies,

have come. Therefore, O beautiful lady, you have to protect yourself.

Speaking thus, Śiva, mounted upon his bull, went to the battlefield. Śiva was surrounded by thirty thousand mahābja pramathas (i.e. the goblin-attendants of Śiva) O king; the brave Vīrabhadra quickly going with (i.e. after mounting) his lion, guarded the left side of the great lord. The archer Maṇibhadra, the killer of the enemies, with (i.e. seated in) a chariot, protected the right side of Śiva. Climbing down from the high lordly mountain, Śiva reached the battlefield with his attendants.

58-62a. Seeing the great lord seated on his bull, the demons roared. Then there was a great din of (i.e. produced by) the armies of the demons and the pramathas. O king, a terrible destruction of the two (armies) took place. Then all those—Nandin, Mahākāla, Kāla, Skanda, the very strong Mālyavat, Puṣpadanta, Vṛṣalin, Svarṇadantika. Caṇḍīṣa, Madana, Caṇḍa, Kūṣmāṇḍa, and Guptalomaka—who had formerly run away from the battle came to the dangerous battle. The very mighty demons fought before Śiva. A very fearful fight between the warriors—the attendants (of Śiva) and the demons—took place.

62b-64. Then having caused the army of the attendants to flee, the very mighty (demons) surrounded Śiva on all sides with showers (i.e. volleys) of arrows, with pikes, lances, maces, mallets, clubs tipped with iron, as the sense-organs surround the soul with the five objects of senses. Then Śiva with arrows that were very fierce, killed the demons in the battle, as Māgha quickly and that moment only destroys the sins by means of a bath (taken in that month).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Jālandhara Disguised as Śiva Goes to Pārvatī

Nārada said:

1-3. Then hearing the din of the demons on the battlefield, Jālandhara, seated in a chariot, came where Śiva was. Angrily and quickly he spoke to his charioteer Khaḍgaroman: "Send forth quickly the chariot to which a thousand horses are yoked. I shall bravely kill that ascetic, adorned with matted hair, sacred ash and bones. What is the power of the crippled one mounted on the bull in the battle with me?"

Nārada said:

4-6. Speaking like this to Khaḍgaroman the haughty (Jālandhara) took his fierce bow and quickly ran to (the battlefield) in his chariot. Vīrabhadra checked him who was coming (there) with sharp arrows. With his body made breathless, he covered him with arrows. Though (Vīrabhadra) the attendant of the lord of beings (i.e. Śiva) was equal to the gods, yet can the skulls attain similarity with the moon?

7-9. Maṇibhadra also pierced the Ocean's son (Jālandhara). He having killed Maṇibhadra by a noose said to the lord (i.e. Śiva): "O Mahādeva, if you have the practice in (wielding) weapons, then come to fight (with me). You strike me. In the battle I shall not strike you having matted hair." Him who was proudly speaking like this, Vīrabhadra, who was angry, covered with arrows, as the sun covers a lotus with his rays.

10-13. Then Maṇibhadra hit his army with a mace. O hero, striking a chariot after a chariot, a horse after a horse, an elephant after an elephant, he knocked them down on the earth. In a moment, the ground was tawny due to the mud-like blood and became difficult to walk over; and the chief attendants (of Śiva) struck down the demons from the mountain in the battle. The brave demons dropped dead on the ground. O king, the demons (thus) fell (on the ground) and the ground was full of (their) trunks, arms, heads, and the backs and trunks and thighs of the elephants.

Nārada said:

14-17. In this way he saw that Śiva was extremely difficult to be conquered in the battle. He also saw other signs in the world: A different lustre was (noticed) in the stars, the moon and all (objects). The sheath of the world was opened (*obscure*); and the lustre of the sun was quite different. O king, Jālandhara who was disappointed again thought: 'I have not seen that Pārvatī about whom Nārada told me much. Now how shall I see Pārvatī, seated on a perpetual place? First I shall go to see her, and after that I shall fight with Śiva.'

18-20a. Thinking like this with (i.e. in) his mind, the son of the Ocean spoke to demon Śumbha: "O brave one, O you, equal to me in heroism, in (the battle for) fierce victory, please fight after taking up a form similar to that of mine. The burden (i.e. the responsibility) of the camp and the army is (now) yours. I shall go to see that Pārvatī who has captivated my heart."

20b-25. Speaking like this, he took down from his body ornaments and gave them to him. He also gave him the armour, the weapons etc., so also the chariot along with the charioteer. Then, O king, the son of the Ocean, along with Durvāraṇa, left the army, and unnoticed he went to the secret cave of that (part of Kailāsa) mountain to the north of Mānasa and took up Śiva's form. Like that (i.e. like him) Durvāraṇa also had taken up the form like that of Nandin. Then the two, disguised as Śiva and Nandin, climbed up the mountain, on a peak of which Pārvatī along with her friends remained, O king. Seeing him who was resting upon Nandin's shoulder, coming (there) and pierced with arrows and seeing his garment smeared with blood, Pārvatī was amazed. Her friends like Jayā etc. being confused, went to him.

26-29. Going near Śiva (i.e. near Jālandhara who was disguised as Śiva), they, being very much afflicted, said to him: "O lord of gods, what has happened to you? By whom are you conquered in the battle? O lord how (is it that) you are distressed, and are weeping like an (ordinary) creature?" He who was thus addressed by them, gave separately (i.e. to each one of) them his ornaments. He slowly took down Vāsuki and others from his body. Seeing under his arm-pit, the heads of Gaṇeśa

and Kārtikeya that were cut off, Pārvatī wept (saying): "O Skanda, O Gaṇeśa, O Rudra." Then all her friends, emaciated through grief, wept.

30-38. At this time Nandin said to Jayā: "You (please) look after her. Maṇibhadra, Vīrabhadra, the brave Puṣpadanta, Dambhana, Dhūmatimira, and Kūṣmāṇḍa and others are killed in the battle. So also Caṇḍin, Bhṛṅgin, Kirīṭin, Mahākāla, Śṛṅkhalin, Caṇḍīṣa, Guptanetra, and Kāla and others are killed in the battle. O goddess, in the great battle I saw the heads of Gajānana and Kārtikeya whirling (round)." Saying so, he dropped them before her. Hearing these words of Nandin, and taking the heads of her sons, Pārvatī, saying, "O (my) son, O (my) son", lamented loudly. (She said:) "O (Kārtikeya, the) enemy of Tāraka, how (is it that) you were killed by the Ocean's son in the battle? You were consecrated by the gods as the general of their army when you were (just) three days old. O hero, how did you destroy (the demon) named Tāraka at that time? Did you fall on the ground because you were abandoned by Śiva? O son, I, who am luckless, have not seen the face of my daughter-in-law (i.e. your wife). O child, you have not enjoyed these pleasures which belong to the mundane existence. O dear Heramba, O Vīghneśa, O Lambodara, O Gajānana, O my son, who knocked you honoured (even) by the siddhas, on the battle-field. How and by whom was your vehicle, the mouse, killed?"

39-43. Gaurī (i.e. Pārvatī) who was lamenting like this, said to Śiva (i.e. to Jālandhara, who had disguised himself as Śiva) who was very much grieved: "O lord of gods, you are actually Rudra. You are Hara. Do not be afraid. Where has your bull gone? Is he killed by Jālandhara? What, dear to you whose body is wounded with arrows, should I do?" Then, on hearing the words of the goddess, Śiva, after heaving a sigh, said: "O darling, both your sons have been killed long back. Why do you lament in vain? O goddess, protect me now by giving me the contact of your body (i.e. by having sexual union with me)." Having heard these untimely and eager words of Śiva, Pārvatī said to the god: "You have not spoken proper words. O Śiva, the wise avoid sexual union when there is great grief, when fear is caused, at (the time of someone having) profound meditation, at (the time of) offering oblations, when

having severe fever, at (the time of) a śrāddha, at (the time of) a march, and in the vicinity of the elders and the old.

44-49. How do you solicit me who am afflicted with grief, troubled by (the grief due to) my son's death, weak, and languid with tears, and who am (mentally) sick?" Hearing these words of Bhavānī, that false Śiva (i.e. Jālandhara disguised as Śiva) who was fascinated by the beauty of Pārvatī, said with a selfish motive: "Those ladies (who) do not give (the pleasure of) sex to the afflicted men (i.e. their husbands) undoubtedly fall into the fierce Raurava (hell). O you beautiful lady, I am without my attendants, without my sons, and without intelligence. O you beautiful young lady, now I am without possessions and without everything. I am void of a good life. I have come here to ask you. Entering my house, I shall quickly cast my figure (i.e. kill myself). O Nandin, get up. We shall go to a holy place. Be before me (i.e. lead me). O dear wife, you go according to your desire. Give up your nature (of a royal wife)."

50-51. Hearing these words of the illusive Śiva, Pārvatī heaved a long sigh, and was paralysed by grief. When he was thus greatly agitated, she did not say anything for a moment. She who had fascinated the entire immobile and mobile world, was herself bewildered by him. I do not know (i.e. cannot conceive) the pain to the mind.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Viṣṇu Creates Illusion for Vṛndā

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O brāhmaṇa, please tell me what happened after the illusive Śiva had (thus) bewildered Pārvatī.

Nārada said:

2-5a. The heart of Viṣṇu lying in the ocean was disturbed. All of a sudden, O best king, his eyes were full of tears. Seeing that sign of a great portent, the lord then getting up from the

bed of Śeṣa, looked at me and Vāyu, and thinking, 'What should be done (now)?' remembered (Garuḍa) the enemy of the serpents. He too, merely by being remembered, stood with his palms joined before the lord. Seeing before him (Garuḍa) the son of Vinatā, Viṣṇu said:

5b-9a. "O Suparṇa, go there where the battle is going on. Seeing whether the hero Jālandhara is killed or Śiva is deluded by him, quickly come (back) and tell everything to me. You alone are capable of seeing the battle between Jālandhara and the lord. Who else after knowing (what is going on) in the great battle would come (back) alive? At times the battle there was hard to be understood due to the showers of weapons and missiles. Going there (as fast) as the movement of an arrow, and with your body covered, come back after having observed the condition of Pārvatī."

9b-10. Lord Viṣṇu after having thought about removing the illusion caused by the demon, quickly gave a pill fully endowed with supernatural powers to Garuḍa. (He said to Garuḍa:) "O hero, due to this (pill) you will not be illusioned." Saying, "All right", he (i.e. Garuḍa) put it into his mouth.

11-17a. The bird (i.e. Garuḍa) thus urged by the lord went round Viṣṇu keeping him to his right, and he, of a wonderful speed, moved out, and having entered the sky, went (to the battlefield). Having gone there he saw unbearable terrible fight with the hosts of demons; but he did not know anything fully. Therefore, he flew speedily and went to (the region) Mānasottara, (a part of) the mountain, which was very high, inaccessible, and difficult to be reached even by gods. The lord of birds (though he tried) to see, could not see the place of Pārvatī. Having come there, (Garuḍa) the enemy of serpents heard a sound. After having gone near he saw the illusive lord of beings (i.e. Śiva). After having put into his mouth the pill, Garuḍa was not illusioned. He knew and understood that he was a demon and not Śiva. "Oh, (how) painful!" Saying so and weeping, he, having come (back) to the ocean, narrated the account to the enemy of Kaiṭabha (i.e. Viṣṇu):

17b-22. "O god, Jālandhara has imitated god Śiva. He, the sinful one, disguised (as Śiva) has deceived Pārvatī. Therefore, O Viṣṇu, if you are a god, (then now) go to the battlefield. O

lord of gods, (please) fight deceitfully with Jālandhara. I have seen his queen on the auspicious seat at Jālandhara. She was sporting by playing upon musical instruments and songs on the ground of the palace. She is more beautiful than Pārvatī and a hundred (nymphs like) Rambhā and Urvaśī. Now neither in the human world nor in the nether world is there a wife like her. Therefore, O Viṣṇu, she is fit to be associated with. What then can be said about (other) ladies. A man, who would touch her with his body would be blessed. And she is the wife of your wife's brother. Kidnap her who is dear to Lakṣmī. Do a good turn to Śiva and please yourself."

Nārada said:

23-27. Having heard the words of Garuḍa (Viṣṇu) dear to Lakṣmī, properly designed a remedy, and quickly sent away the bird. Having deceived Lakṣmī, and having covered her with a yellow garment (as she lay) on the bed, he went out with (i.e. after having taken up) another form and through his divine magical power Viṣṇu was fascinated by the love for Vṛndārikā. Seeing Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu) going (after) having covered himself, O Yudhiṣṭhira, Śeṣa also came in another form to Viṣṇu, and devoutly said to him: "You (please) wait. Allow me (to go). O Viṣṇu, tell me what I should do, where I should go. (Tell me) the mission. It would be a pleasure (if) I shall always eat after seeing your face."

The lord said:

28-32. I shall after covering my body, kidnap the charming wife of Jālandhara for Śiva and for helping Pārvatī. O brother, come on. We shall go to the impassable forest for accomplishing the seduction of Vṛndā.

After he said so, they both went to the forest. There Viṣṇu and Śeṣa who had matted hair and bark-garments, put up a hermitage which was auspicious and gave the fruits of all desires (i.e. gave the desired objects). They had disciples and disciples' disciples, taking any form they liked of tigers, lions, boars, bears, monkeys and apes. Then in that forest, Viṣṇu

attracted Vṛndā with a spell. He, the killer of Madhu, caused torment in her heart.

33-38. In the meantime the queen had a terrible torment. She caused the chowries to be waved by divine ladies. The slim lady, repeatedly thinking about the arrival of her lover, and with her body smeared with sandal, quickly fainted. The queen saw a dream in the fourth watch on the fourteenth (night of the month), which caused fear, and indicated the fear of widowhood. (She saw) the head of Jālandhara, which was dry, was smeared with white ash, the eyes of which were drawn out by a vulture, and the tips of the hair were loose. Kālī whose face was fierce, complexion was dark, garments were tawny, mouth was red, who had held a skull in her hand was eating him. She saw a dream like this and herself mortified. The queen saw the demon having the qualities (i.e. signs) of destruction.

39-40. Then the wife of the demon-king awoke due to songs and (the sound of) the musical instruments of the bards, so also by continuous singing, eulogies, words, praises of the race recited by kinnaras. Then having given all of them who were tired, wealth as a result of her favour, she warded them off (i.e. dismissed them), called brāhmaṇas and told them about the dream that she had seen. The brāhmaṇas, who had mastered sacred texts, said, after having heard the dream:

The brāhmaṇas said:

41-47. O queen, it is a bad dream; it is very fierce; it is inconceivable and causes fear. Give gifts which would destroy the inconceivable fear, to brāhmaṇas. (Give them) cows, garments, gems, elephants and ornaments.

The brāhmaṇas who were pleased (with the gifts) sprinkled (with holy water) the king's wife. Though sprinkled (like that) Vṛndā was tormented with affliction. Dismissing the excellent brāhmaṇas, she then went to the palace. Even (after) remaining there, the lady saw her own city burning. Then being attracted by Viṣṇu due to her own acts, she could not, O king, remain in her house. So the queen went to a forest. The slim lady, having got into a chariot to which female mules were yoked and which

was driven by her friend Smaradūtī, she quickly reached an auspicious forest which was having many trees and was full of various groups of birds, which was endowed with a stream of flowers, was adorned with divine ladies. There only gentle breezes could enter and nothing else.

48-52. Seeing that forest, Vṛndā remembered her husband. 'Now shall I see the hero Jālandhara that has come in front of me?' She did not get pleasure there. So she, with the chariot brought by her friend, and fascinated by Viṣṇu's illusion, entered another forest. Then the fawn-eyed lady saw the forest which was crowded with trees, was blocked by large rocks, created fear, was full of the fear due to lions and tigers, was resorted to by wolves and serpents, in which the trees with their branches touching the sky filled the caves with darkness. Seeing the fearful forest, the lady of unsteady eyes was frightened. Vṛndā said to her friend Smaradūtī who was driving the chariot: "O Smaradūtī, quickly drive home my chariot."

Smaradūtī said:

53-57a. O friend, I do not know the direction. Where should I take the chariot? The tired female mules are proceeding; and here there is no path. Let the chariot driven by destiny go anywhere. Here some flesh-eater will devour (us); (and this will) not be falsified.

Speaking like this, she who was very wonderful, quickly drove the chariot. The chariot reached (the place) where there were delighted siddhas. The siddhas were seen there, and the forest was fearful. The wind was not strong there, nor was the sound of birds (heard there). There was no lustre, no light. There was no water. There were not (seen) quarters and sub-quarters.

57b-60. Even in the characteristic of the chariot that reached there a change took place. The female mules did not neigh. There was no sound of the fellies of the wheels. The banners did not move. The bells did not tinkle. The great bells placed on the pillar of the flag did not make a sound. Seeing (things) like this, Vṛndā said to her friend: "O Smaradūtī, where

shall we go? The forest is full of the fear from tigers and lions. O friend, I did not have happiness in my house, in my kingdom, and in the forest."

Smaradūtī said:

61-66. O Queen, listen. In front (of us) see a very fearful mountain. Seeing (it) the female mules, perturbed by fear, do not go ahead.

Hearing those words of her the queen was frightened. Seeing the necklace round her neck, she quickly got up from the chariot. In the meanwhile there came a demon of a fierce form. He had three feet, five hands and seven eyes. He was extremely fearful. He was tawny; his eyes were like those of a tiger. His shoulders and his face were like those of a lion. His hair red like blood hung like the lord of birds. Seeing him, Vṛndā, having a (tender) body like the calyx of a lotus, was suddenly frightened. Having covered her eyes with her hands, she trembled like a plantain tree. Throwing the whip, the door-keeper said to the queen: "O Queen, protect me who am frightened. This (demon) runs to eat me."

67-71. In the meanwhile the demon reached the vicinity of the chariot. He tossed up the chariot and whirled it with the female mules (yoked to it). The queen fell on the ground like a female deer through the fear of a tiger. Smaradūtī was wounded (and lay) like an aśoka-creeper. Then the demon devoured all the female mules. He seized the queen by her hand as a lion seizes a female young deer. Then the demon spoke to her: "I have heard that your husband is killed by Śiva in the battle. If you want to live, then taking me as your husband live long and without fear from anywhere. Also drink sweet liquor along with good flesh." Hearing these words, the queen was as it were lifeless.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Vṛndā Goes to Heaven

Nārada said:

1-7. Then Viṣṇu wearing matted hair and bark-garments and the other one—his follower—having a fruit in his hand came (to Vṛndā). Seeing them, that fawn-eyed Smaradūtī wailed. Hearing her words (of wailing), the two said to her: "O auspicious lady, do not be afraid. We have come to protect you. How have you come to this fearful forest resorted to by the wicked?" Having comforted the slim lady like this, Viṣṇu said to the demon: "O you of a mean conduct, leave this soft-bodied and sweet-smiling lady. O fool, O you of a wicked conduct, what have you decided to do? You are out to eat the wealth of the three worlds. She is born as a result of the religious merit of the world. You are killing this ornament of the world. By killing Vṛndārikā now in the forest you will today render the world void of light and void of the pride of Cupid. Therefore, quickly leave her who is the deity of a comfortable palace."

8-12. Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the demon who got angry, said: "If you are capable, then free her today from my hand." As soon as these words were uttered, Viṣṇu looked at him angrily. Leaving Vṛndā far away, he fell down after being reduced to ash. Then, she who was stupefied by the illusion of the lord of the world, said: "Who are you, the ocean of pity, who protected me here? O you treasure of austerity, with your sweet words you have removed by destroying the demon my physical and mental agony and torment. O dear ascetic, I shall practise penance in your hermitage."

The ascetic said:

13-20. I am Bhāradvāja's son, known as Devaśarman. Giving up all the pleasures, I have with this lad come to the fearful forest. I have many disciples going (anywhere) as they will, and also other disciples who can take any form they like. O auspicious one, if you desire to practise penance in my hermitage then come along. O queen, we shall go to another (forest) which is far away.

Speaking like this to the queen, Viṣṇu with a slow gait went into eastern direction to a forest full of ghosts and goblins, O king. Vṛndārikā, with her eyes full of tears went after him. Smaradūtī also, saying 'Wait for me', went after him. In the meanwhile a man of a sinful figure and of a wicked conduct spread out a nest. He, the chief of sinners, withdrew the net when it was full of creatures. Seeing the two ladies the hunter let loose the creatures after having fetched them. Smaradūtī said to her (i.e. to Vṛndā): "O Queen, he comes to eat me. May my friend hold me by the hand."

21-26. Having heard what she had said, Vṛndā saw the (man) with a loathsome face. Seeing him, she, dear to the Ocean's son, was shaken by gout due to fear. Being clearly alarmed, she, with Smaradūtī, ran into the forest. While running with her friend, she came to the ascetic's hermitage. In the ascetic's hermitage she saw wonderful things. (There) she saw birds with golden bodies and having many notes. She (there) saw a well rich in golden lotuses and a golden ground. The rivers were carrying milk. The trees were exuding honey. There was a store of sugar. There were also heaps of sweetmeats. All sweet eatables were there. There were many ornaments; and many divine weapons fell from the sky. The horses, being contented, played, jumped and fell there.

27-31a. In a small ascetic's hut Vṛndā saw a very handsome ascetic seated on a seat made of tiger-hide and illumining the three worlds. To him she said: "O lord, protect me from (this) sinner. What is the use of austerities, or religious merit, or silence or muttering prayers? O you whose wealth is your penance, there is no greater penance than the protection of those who are frightened." Thus she who was frightened and whose body was fatigued, spoke to him. Just then the wicked-souled catcher of all creatures arrived there. Queen Vṛndā who was afflicted with fear, embraced Viṣṇu at the neck. Like a creeper she clasped him with her arms in a manner in which the touch was pleasant. (He said to her:)

31b-35. "By means of your embrace the head of your husband will again be endowed with the entrie body with excellences. O you beautiful lady, now go to the picture-room." She who was told by the sage (to go to) the picture-room, entered it. Having

got on a divine bed, she took the head of her husband, and being extremely lustful, and with her eyes closed when she drank its lower lip (i.e. kissed it), the form of Jālandhara appeared there, O king. The lord of the world was similar in figure to her husband, had a chest like that of him; his height was like that of him; his words were like those of him; his temperament was like that of him.

36-42a. Seeing her dear husband having the full form, she said: "O lord, I shall do what is dear to you. Tell me about your battle." Hearing the words of Vṛndā, the deceptive son of the Ocean said: "O queen, listen as to how Śambhu fought with me. O dear one, the terrible Śiva cut off my head with a disc. Then due to your divine power and due to my mind having gone to you the head that was cut off was brought here, and due to the contact with your body it came back to life. O dear young lady, due to separation from me you have become distressed. Forgive me (this) unpleasant (act) that I left you and went to the battlefield." With these other words he then reminded Vṛndā (of his acts). Then, queen Vṛndā who had all auspicious pleasures like tāmbūlas, diversions, garments and ornaments, who was very lustful, firmly embraced her dear husband and kissed him.

42b-46. God Viṣṇu looked upon the pleasure due to the fascination of Vṛndā as superior to (that derived from) salvation, and as giving greater delight than derived from Lakṣmī. Then Mādhava, Kṛṣṇa who was the royal swan in the well charming and shining due to her sports, lost (all) his longing for Lakṣmī due to the beauty of Vṛndā. In that forest, Vṛndā turned into the form of Tulasī. That (Tulasī) that was highly purifying arose from the sweat of Vṛndā. Having, for some days, enjoyed the pleasure due to the contact with Vṛndā's body, (Viṣṇu) the lord of the world, thought about the mission of Śiva.

47-50. Once, after the sexual act was over, Vṛndā saw the ascetic (that is) Viṣṇu with his two hands thrown round her neck. Seeing him and freeing from the clasp of his hands her neck, she said: "How is it that in the guise of an ascetic you came to fascinate me?" Hearing her words, and consoling her, Viṣṇu said to her: "O Vṛndārikā, listen. Know me to be (Viṣṇu) pleasing to Lakṣmī. Your husband has gone to vanquish Śiva and bring Pārvatī. I am Śiva, and Śiva is me. We have (just)

remained separately. O sinless one, Jālandhara has been killed in the battle. Now resort to me."

Nārada said:

51-54. Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, her face was dejected. Then, O king, Vṛndārikā who was angry, replied: "Is it proper for you to have snatched the young wife of him who bound you in the battle, and released you at his father's words, and were honoured with various gems? How can he who is the master of righteousness, dally with the wife of another (man)? The wise say that even the lord enjoys (the fruits of) his acts. Since you, an ascetic in disguise, deluded me, someone disguised as an ascetic will take (away) your young wife."

55-59. Thus cursed Viṣṇu in a moment vanished. When Viṣṇu had left, that bed in the picture-room, those monkeys—all that disappeared. Seeing the forest desolate, Vṛndā went to her friend and told her about the trickery played by Viṣṇu. "I have abandoned the city. My kingdom has gone. (The existence) of my husband is doubtful. I am in the forest. Realising this, where should I, fashioned (thus) by fate, go? My seeing my dear (husband) was (just) a matter of my desires." Vṛndā who was extremely afflicted, heaved a hot sigh and said: "I have, and you too, O Smaradūtī, met with death." Thus addressed by her, she said: "You are my very life."

60-62. Hearing words spoken like that by her, Vṛndā, deciding that this should be done, abandoned her grief and went to a great lake, and with (its) water, she washed her body. Sitting in padmāsana on the bank and making her mind free from the objects of senses, she withered her body which was polluted due to the contact with (the body of) Viṣṇu. She, with her friend, fasted and practised very severe penance.

63-66. The host of the celestial nymphs came to Vṛndā from the world of gandharvas and said to her: "O auspicious one, go to heaven do not cast your body. This (your body) is the weapon of gandharvas; it conquers the three worlds; it is the best joy of Viṣṇu by which he was brought here; how (then) do you cast this (your) body which has obtained (i.e. fulfilled) the desires? Know that your husband is killed with an excellent arrow of Śiva. Be the ornament of heaven obtained through

religious merit. O angry lady, today quickly resort to the grove of the gods." Hearing the sacred precept for young married ladies, the wife of the Ocean's son said (these) words: "Lord (Viṣṇu), the great hero, left (Lakṣmī) the young wife of the lord of gods, and (coming) from heaven, honoured me, and I who was conquered by the god, was made a receptacle of pleasures. Being guileless I shall try to do that by which I shall obtain an immortal state." Speaking like this, Vṛndā, along with her friend, dismissed the bevies of the celestial nymphs. Bound by the noose of love for her, they came and went every day.

67-72. Then Vṛndā, through practice of abstract meditation, burnt, with the fire of knowledge, the qualities, and having withdrawn her mind from the objects of senses, obtained the highest (position). Seeing Vṛndārikā there the great hosts of the celestial nymphs were pleased. With showers of flowers from the sky they showered her. Having made a heap of dry (pieces of) wood, Smaradūtī put on it the (dead) body of Vṛndā, kindled the fire and entered it. That round image of the particles of Vṛndā's body was burnt. Collecting the remaining ashes, they threw them into Mandākinī. At the place where Vṛndā cast her body and went to heaven, was the Vṛndāvana, near the Govardhana mountain. The divine ladies (i.e. the celestial nymphs) went to heaven and told the divine ladies there. Having heard that, all the gods and others, with their minds delighted, gave up the fear of their enemy, the demon, and beat the furious drums. The group of attendants seated there obtained the charm of auspiciousness.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Jālandhara Gives up His Disguise

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Tell me in detail, O sage, how Jālandhara took up the form of Śiva, and what he did on seeing Pārvatī.

Nārada said:

2-8. O king, when that deceptive Śiva (i.e. Jālandhara disguised as Śiva) longed for Pārvatī, she got disturbed, and did not speak anything. 'It is not proper on the part of the lord (to ask for sea) who was obtained by me by penance and is not unwell.' Deciding like this, Pārvatī did not speak to him, O king. Seeing no prevention, she, even as he was seeing, got up, went out and saw Gaṅgā flowing in the sky. Thinking her to be fit for residence, Pārvatī went to practise penance. Then, thinking, 'Even formerly I secured the lord through penance. Now also (I shall secure him) like that', she went with her friends from there. O king, in front of her Pārvatī saw Mandākinī falling from the mountain into the northern part of Mānasa. She was flowing like a series of necklaces separated from the garland of the sky. When the flood of the water of Mandākinī was drawn from the heaven, she dropped like the stream of the flood of the sacred texts from Brahmā's mouth.

9-13a. On seeing that Gaṅgā she was delighted. Having, with her friend, bathed (in the water of Gaṅgā) and honoured her, she then placed her body (i.e. was seated) on the bank of the golden river. Being mutually afraid, they looked at one another. Pārvatī said to her friend Jayā: "O friend, taking up my form (i.e. disguised like me), quickly go to him. Know the truth: Whether he is Śiva or someone else. If he embraces you and kisses you, then know him to be the demon who has come after resorting to deception. If he talks to you about my well-being or otherwise, then undoubtedly he would be Śiva. (Then) come here and tell me".

13b-17. Thus ordered by the goddess Jayā went near (i.e. to) Śiva. Seeing her coming, he was very much afflicted by lust, took her to be Pārvatī and embraced her. Then Jālandhara quickly ejected his semen; and O descendant of Kuru, his organ speedily became small. She said to him: "O demon, you shall never be Rudra. You are of a little semen (i.e. you ejected quickly). You are of a wicked behaviour. I am not Pārvatī. I am her friend." Saying so and resorting to (i.e. taking up) her own form, she again spoke to him: "Due to this sin of yours, you are (i.e. will be) killed by Śiva." Knowing thus (i.e. his falsehood), she reached (the place where Pārvatī remained).

18-23. Going there she said to Pārvatī: "O goddess, this one is Jālandhara, and not your husband Śiva." Then Śiva's wife (Pārvatī) was afflicted with fear, and she quickly entered a lotus. In the lotuses her friends became female bees due to the fear of Jālandhara, O king. Meantime, her guards, not seeing her, the queen, who had gone to the forest, were afraid, and quickly came to the battlefield. Then they were asked by Śumbha. They, with nervousness, saluted him and for getting themselves exempted, they approached Viṣṇu, the lord of gods (*obscure*). Hearing that Vṛndā was kidnapped, he (i.e. Jālandhara) being afraid of Rudra, left the battle. Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, the two very speedy demons, who were sent by Śumbha, came to Mānasottara; and from behind a bush said to the demon who had taken up the form of (i.e. who was disguised as) Śiva:

24-28. "O best king, what is the use of that glory that has gone to a foreign country, which the enemies do not see (i.e. care for) and which is not enjoyed with the kinsmen. O lord, Śumbha has been vanquished; your army has been killed by Śiva in the battle. Come on, come on; fight; you will not obtain Pārvatī. How can a jackal secure a lioness? O king, how can darkness have the lustre of the sun? From the Jālandhara-pīṭha (i.e. your seat) Viṣṇu has taken away your queen. Such a news is heard. Therefore, fight. Having quickly vanquished Śiva in the battle, be the lord of all. Or (i.e. otherwise), being cut to pieces by the arrows of Śiva you will reach his place."

29-33. Hearing these words of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, Jālandhara, with his eyes red, angrily moved out from that mountain. Having cheered up Caṇḍa, and Muṇḍa, Jālandhara gave up the form (i.e. guise) of Śiva, and (while) going along the path, said to Durvāraṇa. "See, O Durvāraṇa, what now Viṣṇu has done there. Having resorted to deception, he has taken queen Vṛndā to his place. An intelligent person should never trust his son-in-law who lives in his house. A wise man should dismiss him after having given him (in marriage) his daughter. A man should never keep his son-in-law in his house. (For) he (i.e. the son-in-law) gradually takes (away) his wealth, wife etc."

Durvāraṇa said:

34. The (fruit of an) act is had in the same way as it is

done, O king. You had come to kidnap Pārvatī (and) Viṣṇu took away your young wife.

Hearing his plain words, Jālandhara silently thought for a moment.

Jālandhara said:

35. Should I go to vanquish Śiva or the powerful Viṣṇu? When the two duties have come up, tell me which is more important.

Durvāraṇa said:

36-39. If you go to conquer Viṣṇu, Śiva will strike you from behind. The brave will strike (you). Śiva will not allow you to go. Therefore, having (first) conquered (Śiva), the lord of beings, and (then) having brought him under control, march against Viṣṇu, if you know his place. O hero, now quickly go to the very powerful demons. Wage a fierce battle which will mature well (i.e. give you good fruit) in heaven.

Having heard (these) words of Durvāraṇa Jālandhara went to fight with Śiva, the meditating sage.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Śukra is Confined by Kṛtyā inside Her Vulva

Nārada said:

1-5. Then Jālandhara saw the battlefield which was fierce due to the heaps of headless trunks, and which was inaccessible due to flow of blood and flesh and due to marrow, fat and bones. There, on the battlefield, the demon Jālandhara who was distressed due to his wife being kidnapped, saw Śiva, the lord of Pārvatī, who was mounted upon a bull, whose body was adorned with the hood of a fierce serpent, who was marked with the (crescent) moon on the mass of his matted hair, and whose body

was graced with the flame coming out of his eye. The Ocean's son saw him not fighting. Having quickly got into his chariot, the Ocean's son, getting angry, then said to Śumbha: "You have not killed the ascetic." Śumbha said to Jālandhara: "He has practised great (i.e. severe) austerities. Therefore, he cannot be killed. Śiva is invincible in the battle."

6-11. Having heard these words of Śumbha, the Ocean's son was violent with anger, and taking the Kalakedāra bow, he (i.e. Jālandhara) went to Śiva, surrounded by a thousand padma army of the demons. In the battle the dreadful (demon) discharged many arrows that were sharp, very large and that had iron props, as a cloud showers (water) on its arrival. In the battle, Śiva's attendants stopped the Ocean's son who was coming (to Śiva). Then (the demon) was angrily struck by Śiva with volleys of fearful arrows. By Śiva's arrows his armour was knocked down on the ground. He, even without the armour, looked like a mountain left by a cloud. The body of Jālandhara was again nailed by Śiva with arrows. From Jālandhara's body much blood flowed. By means of the stream of blood the entire earth was moistened.

12-17. Then the gods were frightened and the demons trembled. The brave pramathas left the battlefield and fled. A great form like that of a river spread everywhere. Then the Ocean's son said to Śiva: "You are the best among the archers. Now I shall do that by which you will perish." Speaking like this, he took up the Kalakedāra bow with the arrows and quickly filled (i.e. covered) Śiva with various kinds of arrows. On the battlefield Śiva with his body covered with crores (of arrows) shone like the sky with birds or a great mountain with trees. Seeing that Śiva was covered with those arrows discharged by the demon (Jālandhara), Vīrabhadra angrily ran to Jālandhara. The powerful and magnanimous (Vīrabhadra) troubled the Ocean's son.

18-23. Jālandhara, the brave son of the Ocean, who was angry, piercing (Vīrabhadra) with thousands of arrows reduced to pieces as small as the sesamum-seeds, with his arrows, (Vīrabhadra's) bow, arrows, chariot, umbrella and charioteer. Then Vīrabhadra, who was without his chariot, struck the Ocean's son with a mace. In the same way he (i.e. Jālandhara) too struck him with a mace and knocked him down on the ground. Seeing him fallen due to the stroke with mace, and very much bewildered, Maṇibhadra

then ran to Jālandhara in the battle. Seeing him who was very angry, coming (to him), the demon, son of the River (Gaṅgā) scattered his implements with his arrows. Then shaking off his bewilderment, he, roaring like a lion, got up. Then Vīrabhadra and the valourous Maṇibhadra angrily struck with two rocks the River's son remaining in the sky.

24-27. Seeing the two rocks to have fallen on his body, Vīrabhadra roared and struck the River's son (i.e. Jālandhara) with the blow of his fist. Maṇibhdra seized the Ocean's son by his feet and whirled him from his chariot. That was a great wonder. The very powerful king of the demons, though seized by Maṇibhadra, struck Maṇibhadra with the blows of his feet and knocked him down. That mighty-armed Jālandhara also (knocked down) Vīrabhadra with (the blow of) his fist. Then Nandikeśvara surrounded by attendants came (there).

28-35a. Seeing him coming Śumbha with his soldiers obstructed him. Then the attendants (of Śiva) and the demons came to one another fighting duels. In the battle Śumbha went to (fight with) Śilādaja, and Rāhu to (fight with) Mahākāla. Niśumbha ran to Kolāhala and Ketu to Kāla. Śailodara (ran) to Guha (i.e. Kārtikeya) and the very mighty Jambha (rushed) to Mālyavat. Mahāpārśva went to Caṇḍa and Caṇḍīśa to Romakaṇṭaka. Vikaṭāsya went to Bhṛṅgī and Urunetra to Gajānana. In this way the chiefs of the attendants went (to fight with) the lordly demons. Then Śilādaja, having an ape-like face, struck by the weapons and arrows of Śumbha, bruised him with great peaks of mountains. Śumbha, afflicted by that, struck Śilādaja with a śakti. Then in the battle Mahākāla struck that Rāhu with a śakti. He struck his chariot with a great rock. The brave Kolāhala was struck with a śakti by Niśumbha. Taking a śakti, he struck his chariot with the charioteer.

35b-41. The very angry demon, the lord of demons, who was without a chariot, struck Kolāhala with a sahasraphaṇin (a serpent-like weapon). Having struck him, he speedily went to another chariot. Struck with the phaṇicakra in the battle, he, in a moment, shook off his swoon, quickly got down from his chariot, took a sword and shield, and cut off everything including the chariot of Niśumbha. Again getting into his chariot, he struck the demon with arrows. The very strong Niśumbha too,

amazed at his valour, very angrily destroyed with a śakti his chariot with the horses. Kolāhala, the mighty one who was without his chariot, went running to Niśumbha and by chaining his arms rendered him who had a chariot, chariotless. Kāla seized Ketu's tail and whirled him into the sky. He too threw a rock. He (i.e. Kāla) quickly cut off the rock.

42-45. Seeing the rock pounded, he struck him (i.e. Ketu) with his fist. Kāla with his entire body bruised by Ketu, ran away through fear. In the same way Śailodara struck Kārtikeya on his chest with a mace. Kārtikeya also struck him with a śakti and knocked him down on the ground. Seeing the demon dead due to the stroke of the śakti, Kārtikeya roared. There was a surprise as when Krauñca was rent asunder. With volleys of arrows Mālyavat struck Jambha in the battle. Jambha too left him swooning after piercing him with sharp arrows.

46-51a. Then Mahāpārśva seized the chariot with volleys of arrows and rendering it horseless easily took it into the sky and knocked down the horseless chariot at Caṇḍa. Seeing the chariot without horses, Caṇḍa took up (i.e. mounted upon) an elephant. Caṇḍa struck with his mace Mahāpārśva attacking him. That very fierce demon, ignoring the blow of the mace, struck Caṇḍa with his fist and knocked him on the ground. The great demon Romakaṇṭha, struck by the weapon of Caṇḍīśa, seized Caṇḍīśa by the feet and dropped him on the top of chariot. All of a sudden he fell on the ground, and he of fearful eyes, went to (attack) him. Gajānana was struck with arrows by Urunetra in the battle. He struck him with his tusk in his chest and knocked him down on the ground.

51b-57. In a moment Urunetra became pacified, quickly came to the chariot, and, with a mallet, struck (Gajānana) on his head adorned with red lead. (Gajānana) the lord of (Śiva's) attendants struck the demon (Urunetra) on his chest with a spear having a sharp edge. From his mouth came out a great demon having nine heads and eighteen arms. O king, he too ran to (Gajānana) the son of Śiva. Gajānana was obstructed by Navaśīrṣa and Urunetra. Though his body was wounded, he angrily took an axe. With that the chief of the attendants (of Śiva) cut off their weapons in the battle. Seeing that Gajānana was obstructed by the two (demons), Senānī—Kārtikeya—quickly

came (there) and killed Navaśīrṣa. Having killed Navaśīrṣa in the battle, he ran to Urunetra. O king, with the blow of his (weapon called) śakti, Kārtikeya knocked him down. Jālandhara, seeing Kārtikeya, and surrounded by his army went to (attack) him.

58-62a. Śiva too through affection for his son and with his attendants (came there) to kill the demons. Then between the two armies a wouderful and very fierce battle took place. In the battle between Śiva and the Ocean's son the heaven and earth were as if lifeless. Then the angry Jālandhara, the lord of the demons, fixed a fierce arrow and with that arrow adorned all round with feathers numbering a thousand hundreds, struck Śiva on his forehead. It sank up to its feathered part into Śiva's head like the moon and like the sun in the evening in the autumn at the end of the summer.

62b-66. Then Śiva took up a great arrow which resembled fire, in whose speed there was wind (i.e. which was speedy like wind), at the head of which remained fire and the sun, at whose knots remained death; in the arrow goddess Dharā (the earth) remained. With that arrow Śiva quickly pierced the Ocean's son in his chest. Due to the stroke of the arrow, he, with his body wounded by that arrow, and wet with a stream of blood, fell down like a mountain struck by thunderbolt. At that time the demons wailed, and the pramathas (the goblin-attendants of Śiva) roared. Seeing the Ocean's son fainted, the demons obstructed Śiva. Some were eager to protect him, others stood around him.

67-70. While Jālandhara, the Ocean's son was in a swoon, Śiva struck the army of Jālandhara with arrows. After a long time Jālandhara gave up the swoon (i.e. regained consciousness), and, full of fear, saw his army killed (by Śiva) and dispersed on the battlefield; he mentally remembered his great preceptor, Śukra. Remembered by him, Śukra quickly came to Jālandhara. Wishing him well, Śukra said to the Ocean's son: "O great king, O mighty one, what mission of you should I do?"

Nārada said:

71. Hearing these words of Śukra, Jālandhara very much honoured Śukra, his preceptor, and saluting him said:

The king said:

72-76. O Śukra, bring back to life all these demons that are dead all around.

Thus addressed by the Ocean's son in the battle, he observed the army which measured twentyfive thousand yojanas and which was further and further crowded with the bodies and chariots of the demons piled up on earth up to ninetyfive yojanas. (He) then (saw) the earth as it were full of the bodies of the warriors and horses (and elephants). Having sprinkled the demons with charmed water, Śukra made them rise up. While Śiva tied firmly the mass of his matted hair with serpents, Śukra made the army rise up by means of a charm.

77-80. Śiva thought on seeing the demons that had come, as lions do on seeing tigers or lordly elephants do on seeing pigs: 'What has happened here? Somewhere he creates (i.e. brings back to life) the dead.' Thinking like this on the battle-field, Śiva saw on the battlefield, Śukra bringing back the demons to life and running faster (i.e. very fast). Then Śiva who was angry, made up his mind to kill Śukra. Requesting the Trident-holder (Śiva) in private, Śukra said to him: "I am a brāhmaṇa. How do (i.e. can) you kill a brāhmaṇa skilled in all lores? O Śiva, you will incur (the sin of killing) a brāhmaṇa on killing me."

81-84. Hearing these words of Śukra, Śiva gave up the trident. On remembering the former account, viz. the sticking of Brahmā's head (he thought:) 'A brāhmaṇa is not to be killed, even if he takes away one's life dear to one. But this (Śukra) who is bringing the demons back to life, must be fully curbed by me. Therefore, I shall quickly throw him leading the life of a demon, into the vulva of a woman.' From the third eye of Śiva who was thinking like this, a female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes, quickly (came out). She was naked, very fierce; she had let loose her hair; her belly was big. Her breasts were big and hanging; Her vulva, fangs and eyes were fearful.

85-89. Śiva, who was addressed by her, 'Order (me)', said to her: "O Kṛtyā, put quickly the wicked-minded preceptor of the demons into your vulva; and carry (i.e. keep) him in your vulva

till I kill Jālandhara. After the demon Jālandhara is killed, you take him out and release him." That deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes, who was thus told by Śiva, ran to Śukra. On seeing her the demon fell on the ground; and the demons fled. Shaking Śukra by seizing his hair, she embraced Śukra, and laughing, she held him in her vulva, O Jayanandana. Seeing his preceptor put by the deity into her vulva when Jālandhara fixed the arrows, she disappeared.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Jālandhara Is Killed

Śrī Nārada said:

1-8. Then Jālandhara said to Śiva: "O Śiva, protect yourself now. O Śiva, I shall today throw you there where Viṣṇu lives. Then, having dragged Brahmā, I shall throw him into the ocean. When all of you are seized (by me) I am then the lord of all." Having spoken like this, he entrusted the responsibility of the army on the demons Śumbha etc. The warriors like Niśumbha guarded the endless four-limbed army. Seeing all the excellent demons like Śumbha, Niśumbha, Pheṁkāra, Pheruṇḍa, Dhūmralocana, Ketu, Biḍālajaṅgha, Rāhu, Durvāraṇa and Yama, so also Kālāsura, Lavaṇa, Bhūmiretas and the demon Andhaka, and Raktavīrya and others, Caṇḍin and Cāmuṇḍin, ready to fight in the battle, the attendants of Śiva like Vīrabhadra and others, confronted them in the battle, O king. Then a horrible, fierce and thrilling battle took place, in which even the principal demons, suffering from wounds, fell (down). O king, the attendants (of Śiva) struck with all weapons by Śumbha and others in the great war, fell and others fled.

9-12. The demons, having vanquished the attendants, confronted Śiva. They showered him with volleys of arrows, as the clouds shower the Meru mountain. Then Śiva, seated upon his bull (Nandin), drew his bow and struck with volleys of arrows the demons on the battlefield. The powerful one struck the

demons with arrows with sharp horse-shoe-shaped heads. He quickly killed the remaining army on the battlefield with weapons and missiles. The battlefield was covered with elephants, men and horses that had fallen (in the battlefield).

13-18a. It appeared like the earth (covered) with mountains cut off by thunderbolt. Then the Ocean's son fashioned an illusory (form of) Gaurī that was endowed with the quality of beauty and adorned with all ornaments. Making an illusory (form of) Jayā the Ocean's son said: "Quickly go in front of Śiva, and quickly fascinate him on the battlefield." The illusory Jayā thus addressed, went (to Śiva). Having gone to the battlefield and with her hair let loose she wept. Asked by Śiva, she said: "From the mountain north of Mānasa your dear wife, Pārvatī, O god, has been kidnapped by the Ocean's son." Hearing these words of her, the bull-bannered (god Śiva) said to her: "O Jayā, you go to the bull (Nandin). The demons will kidnap you."

18b-24. Then, Jayā, mounting upon the bull (Nandin) and embracing Śiva, said: "O Hara, I (shall) go. I cannot live without Pārvatī." Taking the moon that had entered the matted hair of Śiva, she—the illusory form—quickly got down from the bull. Clasped by the illusory form, he went to the battlefield. Then hearing that Pārvatī was kidnapped, Śiva became worried. O king, encircled by the demon's illusion, he did not recognise himself. In the meanwhile, the Ocean's son surrounded by a great army, came after having put the illusory Pārvatī in his chariot to Śiva. In the same way, there was the sound of musical instruments in (i.e. declaring) the victory of Jālandhara, due to which the earth shook and the mountains echoed. The Ocean's son showed Pārvatī to Śiva. Rudra (i.e. Śiva) too saw his dear wife who was distressed due to separation (from him), who was helpless, who was slim and whose eyes were over-anxious, sitting in his enemy's chariot.

25-30a. She was again and again crying, "O lord, O dear Rudra." Śiva saw Pārvatī seated in the strong enemy's chariot like the sacred text remaining in the possession of a heretic. 'How shall I get (back) my beloved?' (Like this), Śambhu deluded by the demon's illusion lamented. 'O dear one, the demons deluded me. How have you been kidnapped?'

The Ocean's son, seeing Śiva bewildered with grief and delusion, laughed and uttered (these) words as kind (person would do). "You are without any authority. You are without sexual love. Though you are the lord, you have become miserable without Pārvatī. O Śiva, do not weep. I (shall) give you your dear wife. Having taken Pārvati, I have spared you the fight."

30b-36. Speaking like this to Śiva, he got down Pārvatī from the chariot. Then he sent his army towards Śaṅkara. To take Pārvatī who was crying "Protect (me), protect (me)", Śiva too, along with (his) bull (Nandin), quickly ran towards his (i.e. Jālandhara's) army. When Śiva seized Pārvatī with his hand, the demon Śumbha quickly seized her and remained in the sky. The mighty Śiva discharged his spear to kill the demon Śumbha. Śumbha left her and she fell on the spear. She, beautiful in all limbs and weeping, when left, fell along with the spear in front of Śiva, and saying "All right" died (there only). Rudra, seeing the illusory Pārvatī dead, was full of grief and delusion, and wailing "O dear one", he fell in a swoon on the ground. Having regained consciousness (after) a moment, he cursed Śumbha and others on the battlefield: "Pārvatī will kill you."

Nārada said:

37-42. O king, in the previous age of Manu the demons Śumbha and others were knocked down by the goddess due to Śiva's curse. Having cursed them and having gone out he wailed, "O dear one, where have you gone after abandoning me, the distressed one, on the battlefield? Giving up attachment for me, I Śaṅkara, am made distressed by separation from you. O dear one, even Viṣṇu does not know me to be abandoned by you (i.e. does not know that you have left me). O goddess, in the fire-vessel of Dakṣa, you had offered your head. You were again obtained by me. (Then) how do you abandon me again? O you of a beautiful body, O Girijā, get up, get up. Communicate with me." In the meanwhile, Brahmā remaining in the group of deities, knowing that Śiva was deluded by the demon's illusion, came (there). He who was invisible, spoke to the wailing Śiva:

Brahmā said:

43-45. You are without grief, delusion, father and mother. You do not have pain, pleasure, son, a wife, or an enemy. You are not born of a father, nor will you be born (of a father). You are looked upon (like this) by the sages? (Then) whence this delusion? O lord, you are one; you have taken up various forms, as the sun is seen (to be many) in the waves of the water. Those who observe restraint, reach by means of meditation your feet, the great form, unintelligible, and quite indescribable. This your beloved is not distressed like you. O god, give up the illusion fashioned by Jālandhara. That Pārvatī has gone into the bud of a lotus. Fight; kill the multitude of enemies. Protect us.

46-52. Having heard these words of Brahmā, Śiva knew (the illusion). Knowing the demon's illusion, he threw a large rock (at the demons). With that he killed three hundred crores of demons. O king, then having very angrily mounted upon his bull (i.e. Nandin), Śiva took his Pināka bow and arrows. Then the son of the Ocean (i.e. Jālandhara), seeing Śiva, free from the illusion, manifested quickly another group of illusions which deluded the lord of gods, which was very wonderful, which was very powerful. Jālandhara turned into (one) having a crore of arms and fought Śiva with trees, weapons and missiles; and he, the Ocean's son, put the earth that was decorated with the red chalk into the intermediate space; and the Ocean's son made the earth adorned with many charming temples of deities, full of various (kinds of) flowers. Celestial nymphs, more lovely than Menakā danced there. Śambhu, forgot (to fight) and instantly abandoned the bow, and deluded by (the sound of) musical instruments and songs and by the tāṇḍava dance of the lord of demons, started, being mounted upon the bull.

53-60. Seeing Śiva seated on the bull deluded, the Ocean in an embodied form, to delude him, roared with tāṇḍava, songs, musical instruments, and dances. He, constantly being rejoiced, threw the beings into the ocean; "Where are all those deities? Where are the attendants led by Nandin? You who are respectable, are deluded by the demon's illusion. O lord Śambhu, why do you neglect (him)? Taking out the disc remaining in your belly, and fashioned for killing him only, O Maheśa, kill

Jālandhara with that in the battle." By (i.e. on hearing) these words of Kṛṣṇa, and recollecting himself to be the lord, he quickly mounted upon the bull and came to the great battle. Seeing that Śiva coming, that angry demon Jālandhara surrounded by his entire army, stopped him. The form of Śiva, who was angry, (was one that) would destroy the creation. In his third eye there were fires and the demons were like moths. O king, seeing the lord's form full of fierce flames, the demons like Śumbha, so also those like Rāhu seeing Śiva, were frightened and through fear they entered the nether world.

61-66. Seeing many soldiers killed in the great war, and seeing certain demons like Śumbha that were spared, and (seeing a few) who had fled away, Jālandhara remained on the battlefield like a mountain. Seeing actually the true form of Rudra, he was delighted. Then Jālandhara laughed and said to Śiva: "Withdraw your (fierce) form with which you are burning (the world with) the mobile and the immobile. Give up your divine power and fight with a weapon." Hearing these words of Jālandhara, Śiva then said (to him:) "O lord of demons, ask for a boon. I am pleased with your deed that you are fearless even after having seen such a (fierce) form. O demon, even the entire universe is not able to look at this form of me and at my lustre. (But) you are fearless in that respect."

Nārada said:

67-71. Regarding this to be a favour of Śiva, Jālandhara, having no desire for the mundane existence, asked from him release as a boon in the form of absorption into him.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

O demon, this your divine body endowed with all pleasures and divine powers, and lovely due to Vṛndā and charming remaining here will meet with death here. Not knowing the highest soul that is one and immutable, for a while, how do you give it up? How do you desire salvation? Your dear queen Vṛndā has been taken away through divine power. Having known the nature of Brahman, she has reached that highest position. Now she is difficult to obtain, so also that position is

difficult to obtain. Ask for a boon in the worldly existence between heaven and salvation.

Jālandhara said:

72-75. O god, the position of salvation is obtained by a blessed one. Now I am blessed, since, struck by you I am seeing you.

Śiva said:

O demon, if you are eager to go to my place, a holy place, then (striking me) with strong arrows, quickly make me angry. Then, O sinless one, I shall kill you, (and) you will go to my place.

Hearing the words of the great god, Jālandhara said to Śiva: "I shall not first strike you who are adorable to the whole world."

Nārada said:

76-81. Thus addressed, Śiva quickly struck the Ocean's son with arrows and those arrows stuck to the Ocean's son's body shone as the bamboos blazing with fire shine on the skirt of Lohagiri. Jālandhara filled the body of Śiva with arrows. With those arrows Rudra shone like the sky full of birds. Then, O king, a duel took place between Jālandhara and god (Śiva). There is no other striker than Śiva. There is no other one than the Ocean's son who bears (the strokes). With thousands of crores of mountains taken out from the cavity of the earth, the Ocean's son filled the lord of Pārvatī in the battle. Then the demon (Jālandhara) was struck on his chest with a spear by Śiva. From his mouth fearful and yawning Jvara emerged. He having the face of a lion and a human figure was (called) Vīrajvara.

82-92. Seeing Jvara having a lion's face, moving out of the demon's body, (Śiva) made a 'hum' sound. From it a Śarabha[1] came out. He was knocked down by the Śarabha, sent out by

1. Śarabha: A fabulous animal said to have eight legs and be stronger than a lion.

Śiva. Seeing that Saṅkara, along with the lord of bulls (viz. Nandin) invincible, that Ocean's son speedily came near the bull. Seizing the bull by his tail, he whirled him into the sky. (That) mighty-armed Jālandhara threw him on the Himālaya mountain. Then Girijā's husband (i.e. Śiva) discharged the very fierce trident. Catching it with his hand near Śiva, the lord of the demons, the Ocean's son, mounted upon his chariot, took the bow (called) Kalakedāra, and filled with arrows Śiva standing on the earth. Śiva cut off his weapons and arrows and pounded with arrows his chariot which was ten yojanas extensive, along with the charioteer and horses. Jālandhara too, who was chariotless, ran to Śiva in the battle. A fierce, wonderful and thrilling battle took place between the two. Seeing it, the deities, through fear of the unexpected deluge, trembled. The two, of a fearful valour, shaking the earth by means of their foot(-steps) and making the sky tremble with the sounds struck each other with all missiles.Then seeing the great might of the lord of demons, Śiva, through his divine power, took a multitude of weapons. Then a demon, having a crore of arms and with eyes fearful due to the fangs, though without a weapon, quickly ran to Śiva.

93-99. On the battlefield he bound Śiva with the bond of his large arms. Then with a sword he cut off the jungle (i.e. multitude) of his hands. Rudra, overpowered by the arms of the Ocean's son, became dark blue. The Ocean's son easily fought with him. Though his hands were cut off, he fought as Rāhu (would fight) with his head. The River's son (Jālandhara) pleased Śiva with his fighting. Śiva who was pleased, said: "Ask for a difficult boon." Jālandhara too said to him: "Give me your position. Please do not insult me who am without arms and weapons. Quickly give me a divine power; otherwise I shall destroy you." Saying so, and being equipped with arms he struck him on his chest. Then, vomitting from his mouth the Sudarśana disc which he himself had formerly fashioned, he took it in his hand and angrily raised it. Its brilliance was like that of a crore of suns and it was swallowing (the world including) the mobile and the immobile.

100-106. With that disc the head of Jālandhara was cut off (by Śiva). Then that head flew into the sky to (the distance of) a hundred yojanas. O king, then it having a terrible mouth

with a hundred fangs, having eyes of heaven and earth, went, with the speed of a tiger to the house of Brahmā. Then again seeing the head in heaven Śiva ran to the head, from which blood was oozing and which was making a fearful sound. Then the quarters disappeared, and the sky (too) disappeared. The light of the luminaries was not there, and the earth trembled through fear. Rudra, with the disc, quickly cut off the head coming to him. Being cut into two it fell upon the Himālaya mountain. Then the pieces of Jālandhara's head quickly entered Śiva when all the beings were watching it.

107-112. That trunk of Jālandhara, red due to blood, danced. Again and again demons sprang up from his throat. They were repeatedly struck by Śiva with the disc. The entire earth was filled with the marrow of the Ocean's son. O king, due to the marrow only, Medinī (i.e. the earth) got that name. In the northern region of Kailāsa, where the blood of the excellent demon turned into a hill, the city (called) Śoṇitapura was (situated). Then seeing the heaps of flesh covering every place, the lord (i.e. Śiva) remembered his sixtyfour attendants. Due to the discerning recollection the goddesses also reached the vicinity of Śiva. With the palms of their hands folded they said: "O Śiva, what do (i.e. should) we do?"

Mahādeva said:

113-120. Together you who are permitted by me, should quickly eat the heaps of the demon's flesh which resemble mountains.

Brāhmī, Māheśvarī and Kaumārī so also Vaiśṇavī and Vārāhī, and Māhendrī, (all) thus ordered by Śiva, and shining with their own attendants, looked at the heaps of flesh with a cruel eye, and in a moment they vanished. Then the weak body of Jālandhara was powerfully approached by śaktis. When his body was seized by them, from his body came out a lustre; it reached Śiva and in a moment it disappeared. That lustre resembling the sun's lustre, got merged into Śiva. Thus the enemy of gods met his destruction from Śiva. Maheśvara being pleased, said to them all: "Ask for a boon." Then all those female attendants asked the lord of the world: "Those men in the mortal worlds, who desire enjoyments and salvation and boons, will always worship the group of

your attendants (the Yoginīs) in their house. Due to your favour all that is desired by them will come about."

Mahādeva said:

121-128. I am the giver of a boon to him on the earth, whosoever will every day devoutly worship your group. To my devotee or that of Viṣṇu who hates the group of Yoginīs, I shall be terrible and will take away his religious merit.

Thus were boons given to the Yoginīs in the battle. In the meanwhile Śiva remembered that Bhavānī (his wife) and his bull (Nandin). On just being remembered Pārvatī and the bull came there in a moment. Śiva's beloved (i.e. Pārvatī) came there along with her friends. Giving up her Bhrāmarī form, she mounted upon half the portion of (the body of) Hara. Then, O king, with Pārvatī, Śiva rejoiced. To the Yoginīs he said: "Drink the blood on the trunk of Jālandhara. Hearing it they were very much delighted. The Yoginīs, after (eating and) drinking the flesh, marrow and blood danced with joy. Then seeing their sport, Śiva was pleased; and taking up his Bhairava form, he drank it in the midst of them. The group of the Yoginīs were of sharp fangs and huge bodies.

129-132. Even today at (this) time they are seizing the flesh. Therefore, demon Jālandhara killed in battle, does not get up. Then there came the groups of deities like Brahmā. The sages, the Maruts and the gods praised the great lord (Śiva). The quarters were bright; fragrant breezes blew; showers of flowers fell from the sky. The drums also, that were beaten, produced sound above (i.e. in the sky) when he was consecrated. Then the earth was sprinkled with the continuous showers of honey by the swarms of bees going over it and humming sweetly, being blinded by the fragrance. In his assembly fell the shower of flowers dropped by gods.

133-136. When the Ocean's son was killed by Śiva with the strokes of the arrows, shower of flowers appeared (there), beautiful women danced and, yakṣas led by gods and kinnaras sang (songs). Śiva, having great fame due to his victory, and then being praised by groups of gods, siddhas and cāraṇas, went to his own mountain. From the mountain, Pārvatī also surroun-

ded by her friends, went to the Śveta mountain. The divine damsels waited upon her with a shower of flowers. Lord Śiva, the kind god, knowing (this) established the groups of gods in their own positions, and gave them his wealth. What more should be said when great pity would be shown by the lord? Or which other god is there who would bring under his control the earth on all sides? Gods having got (back) their kingdom, shone as before. Being the regents of quarters (again) they shared portions in sacrifices.

Nārada said:

137-142. O king, I have thus narrated in a sequence to you the very wonderful account of Jālandhara, hero of the world. Even now Viṣṇu being under his sway, does not leave the Milky Ocean. Know that everyone enjoys the fruit of his own act(s). To remove your grief I have told you this excellent account. As long as the body lasts, a man being influenced, experiences (the fruits of) his actions—pains and pleasures. O king, there is no greater refuge than knowledge. Even Kṛṣṇa and others when bound in a body have pleasure, pain etc. Then what can be said about others who are averse to detachment? Knowing that such is the course of acts, which is the strongest of all, be patient, wait for the arrival of auspicious acts again. At (the proper) time, you will, after vanquishing your enemies, regain your kingdom.

143-148. Having heard this account, (a man) is not overcome by griefs. Here (the four goals of human life, viz.) righteousness, material welfare, sensual enjoyments and salvation are properly told. A brāhmaṇa gets the auspicious knowledge leading to heaven, removing sins, destroying delusion, and a kṣatriya obtains a kingdom. Hearing (it) a vaiśya would obtain wealth, and a śūdra happiness. A weak king who is deprived of his kingdom but remains on the good path, again obtains his kingdom by hearing it every day. O King, after hearing this, the good do not like to hear anything else, as a man does not like to hear the harsh crying of crows after hearing the sweet notes of cuckoos. Having heard this guileless account, he who is dear to the hearts of the good, should please the reader (of this

account) by (giving him) gold, sesamum-seeds, garments etc. and land. When he is pleased, he would get the (desired) fruit.

149-155. When the reader—the preceptor—is honoured, the deities also would be pleased. He should give gifts of food and honour brāhmaṇas. He, being prosperous with sons and grandsons, is always victorious. He who listens to this excellent account, is born in Viṣṇu's world. O king, those best men who, under this pretext, listen to the cause of the rise of Tulasī, have no sin anywhere. By listening to or telling this auspicious, sin-removing greatness of Tulasī (a man) undoubtedly attains salvation. By seeing Tulasī destroying sins, planted in one's house, the sin of a brāhmaṇa's murder perishes. There is no doubt about this. (A man) should worship Viṣṇu with Tulasī (leaves) in Kārtika and Māgha. Viṣṇu's worship in Vaiśākha is especially laid down. Even by once going round it, all the sin goes (away). Those śūdras who are always engaged in (giving) gifts, are purified within (due) time. Their bodies also become worthy of worshipping deities. Those devotees of Viṣṇu, now very rare in this Kali age, have gone far away from sins.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A Description of Śrīśaila

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Nārada, where is that charming mountain Śrīśaila? Which is the holy place there ? Which god is worshipped there ? Tell me now in which direction it is said to lie in the world.

Nārada said :

2-9. O king, listen; I shall describe the best mountain Śrīśaila, hearing about which people are free from such sins as killing a child. The grove on the mountain is charming and is resorted to by sages. It is full of many trees and creepers adorned with various kinds of flowers. It is resounding with the notes of

swans and cuckoos. The mountain grove is made fragrant with śrī trees, kapittha trees, śirīṣa and rāja trees. So also with pārijātaka flowers and with kadambas and udumbaras, with many fragrant flowers. It is very much resorted to by all the wives of the sages with their disciples. Some are engaged in studies and some in lectures. Some there have raised their hands; others are standing on their toes. Some are engrossed in meditation upon Śiva; others are devoted to Viṣṇu. Some are not eating anything; some are given to eating leaves. Some eat bulbs, roots and fruits; others have observed the vow of silence. Some are standing on one foot; some are sitting in the Padmāsana[1] posture. Some, eating no food, have practised very difficult penance.

10-13. There are auspicious hermitages and various beautiful rivers. There are many natural ponds and many tanks. O great king, all around is indeed seen the mountain, on which, O king, Mallikārjuna always remains. On top of the mountain is the charming peak, on merely seeing which peak (one gets) salvation. There is no doubt about it. Resorting to (i.e. in) the south stands the best mountain. Here is very beautiful Pātālagaṅgā.

14-18. Merely by bathing there (i.e. in it) a man is free from great sins. On seeing the peak of Śrīśaila, on dying at Vārāṇasī and on drinking water at Kedāra certainly there is no rebirth. It is a great place of the ascetics and meditating saints. Therefore, with every effort one should see it. This is Vijñānadeva (god of wisdom). He destroys great sins. There is the charming city Siddhapura giving divine pleasures, in which celestial damsels sing and rejoice. Therefore, this best mountain gives joy on seeing it. Those men who desire salvation, should see it.

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1. Padmāsana: A particular posture in religious meditation. In it the left foot is placed on the right thigh. Then the right foot is placed on the left thigh.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Story of Sagara

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-5. O best divine sage, hear about the very auspicious Haridvāra. Gaṅgā flows there (i.e. by it); and it is said to be the best holy place. There gods, sages and men dwell. (So also) there god Viṣṇu himself always takes resort (i.e. lives). O child, this great holy place came about in ancient days. On merely seeing it sin goes away. Here due to special religious merit Gaṅgā has become very holy. Due to her touching Viṣṇu's feet she has the water of (i.e. coming from) the feet of Viṣṇu. O wise one, Bhagīratha brought her along the path. The magnanimous one (thus) emancipated his ancestors.

Nārada said:

6-9a. O god, who is the Bhagīratha of great penance to whom you have referred, who brought the holy (water) for the good of the people? The holy place on Gaṅgā is very auspicious and destroys all sins. All people say like this that it is the best holy place. He who, even from (a distance of) hundreds of yojanas would say 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā', is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's world. How did he bring it? What (was his) act? Tell that, O you of a good vow.

Mahādeva said:

9b-16. Who brought Gaṅgā, how he brought it at the very beautiful Gaṅgādvāra—all that I shall tell you in due order. Formerly there lived Hariścandra, (the only one) observing truth in the three worlds. He had a son, Rohita, solely devoted to Viṣṇu. He too had a son, called Vṛka, most righteous and established on a good path. In his family was born his son Subāhu. His son was Gara by name. He was extremely righteous. Some time, for (some) reason, the king became extremely unhappy due to fate. For religious reasons he was not censured in his country. Taking his family he went to Bhārgava's hermitage. Through compassion he was then protected by Bhārgava there. O brāhmaṇa, there a son named Sagara was born to him.

Looked after by Bhārgava, he then grew in the holy hermitage. He performed all (sacraments like) thread-ceremony of (i.e. befitting) a kṣatriya. He learnt (the use of) weapons and studied the Vedas.

17-24. Having received the missile of (i.e. presided over by) Agni, king Sagara moved on the earth and killed Tālajaṅghas with Haihayas. He, of a great penance, also killed Pāradas with Śakas.

Nārada said:

O Śaṅkara, tell in detail the greatness of Sagara. The very powerful great king of the solar dyansty is well-known.

Mahādeva said:

Due to a calamity of (i.e. befalling) Gara, his kingdom was taken away by Haihayas, Tālajaṅghas and Śakas, O Nārada. These tribes—Yavanas, Pāradas, Kāmbojas and Śakas (showed) valour. That king Gara whose kingdom was snatched, then went to a forest. The distressed one followed by his wife, died (there). His auspicious wife was pregnant and observing a vow. Formerly, he with his wife had chosen (i.e. gone to) Bhārgava with a desire for a son. She, having arranged the funeral pyre of her husband in the forest, wept. Aurva (the family preceptor) prevented Gara's wife, O Nārada. He told her about that son (of her) most righteous, good and dear (to all).

25-28. When she was told about the son, she refrained from dying. Then after two months he rose (i.e. was born) in Aurva's hermitage. Aurva performed his sacraments like the birth-rite. O great sage, thread-ceremony etc. took place there. Due to his contact with Aurva, he studied everything like Veda etc. Having taught him Vedas and sacred texts, he taught him (the use of) the missile of (i.e. presided over by) Agni, difficult to bear even for gods, O glorious one. He was endowed with that power of spiritual life in the battle.

29-36. Being angry, he quickly killed Haihayas with his might. He captivated them and obtained fame in the (three) worlds. Then those Śakas with Yavanas, so also Kāmbojas and Pallavas, being struck by him, sought the shelter of Vasiṣṭha. Vasiṣṭha, the very lustrous one, having made an agreement kept

away king Sagara after granting them protection from fear. Sagara, keeping his pledge and the preceptor's words, struck them righteously, and made them deformed. He half-shaved the heads of Śakas and sent them away. He completely shaved the heads of Yavanas and also of Kāmbojas. Pāradas are clean-shaved; Pallavas keep moustache. Having thus vanquished all he collected religious merit. Having conquered this earth, the all-righteous victorious king quickly prepared for (the performance of) a horse-sacrifice. His horse, moving near the south-east ocean, was taken away near the shore and was taken into the (interior of the) earth.

37-42. Then through his sons he got that region dug up everywhere. They digging there did not find the horse in the great ocean. They who were in a hurry, saw there an ancient man—the ancient man was Kapila, the lord of the worlds. The fire produced from the eyes of him getting awake, burnt sixty thousand of them; (only) four of them remained (unburnt). O brāhmaṇa, (the four) continuing his family (were:) Hṛṣīketu, Suketu, the other one Dharmaratha, and the brave Pañcajana. The revered lord Viṣṇu himself gave him five boons: (continuation of) family, salvation, good fame, ocean and son. Due to that act he got the state of ocean. He obtained that sacrificial horse from the ocean. He, of a great fame, performed a hundred horse sacrifices.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

The Greatness of Haridvāra

Nārada said:

1. O you master of knowledge, tell (me) how those very mighty, brave, valorous sons of Sagara, sixy thousand in number, were born.

The lord of Pārvatī said:

2-8. Sagara had two wives whose sins were burnt by penance. Aurva, the best sage, being pleased, granted them boons: One

(queen) chose sixty thousand powerful sons. The (other) one, having the boon, asked for one son supporting the family. Then in a gourd one gave birth to many brave sons. They were brought up in due course by the nurses. The boys enhanced love when the pitchers were filled with ghee. For the magnanimous ones the cows were milked. The noble ones grew due to that milk only. One son by name Pañcajana became the king. Then there was the powerful (son) of Pañcajana named Aṁśumat. Dilīpa was his son, and his son was Bhagīratha. He, of a good vow, brought (to the earth) the greatest river, Gaṅgā. Having brought her to the ocean, he made her his daughter.

Nārada said:

9. How did he bring Gaṅgā? What (kind of) penance did he practise? Tell me all that. O you treasure of kindness, you are of a good vow.

Mahādeva said:

10-16. For the well-being of his ancestors he went to the Himālaya mountain. Having gone there he practised penance for a myriad years. That first god who is untinged, was pleased (with him). This Gaṅgā given by him came (here) from the sky. There god Viśveśvara always remains. Seeing Gaṅgā coming, he seized that Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā). He held her in the mass of his matted hair for a myriad years. Due to the prowess of the lord Gaṅgā did not move out of it. Then he (i.e. the king) thought: 'Where has my mother gone?' Having thought like this through meditation (he knew): 'The lord has seized her.' Then that king Bhagīratha went to Kailāsa. O best sage, having gone there, he practised a severe penance. Then he propitiated (me). I gave him the river. Having given up (i.e. plucked) one hair, the river was given (to him).

17-23a. Taking Gaṅgā, he went to the nether world where his ancestors stood (dead). Then the first name of Gaṅgā was said to be Alakanandā. When she went (i.e. flowed) to Haridvāra, she came to be called Viṣṇupādodakī. That is an excellent holy place which is not easily accessible even to gods. Those men who bathe at that holy place, and especially after seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu go round (the image) keeping (it) to their right,

do not experience grief. There are many heaps of sins like (those of) killing a brāhmaṇa etc. All those perish on always seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu. Once I had gone to Haridvāra, the place of Viṣṇu. Due to the prowess of that holy place, I became of the form of Viṣṇu. Those best men who go (to this holy place), go to Viṣṇu. Those human beings—men and women, have four arms everywhere. Merely by seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu they all go to Vaikuṇṭha.

23b-28. For me also that holy place Haridvāra is a superior holy place. It is the principal holy place among the holy places. It gives the four goals (of human life). In the Kali-age it gives religious merit to men, and gives salvation and material welfare also. There the clear (water of) Gaṅgā always flows. This auspicious, excellent, account of Haridvāra is told (by me). Eternal fruit is (obtained) by those who listen to it. A learned man, merely by seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu obtains that fruit which is obtained when a horse-sacrifice is performed or when a thousand cows (are given). O brāhmaṇa, many sins of this kind —all of them—perish due to just seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

An Eulogy of Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Prayāga

Mahādeva said:

1-5. O best sage, I shall narrate the importance of Gaṅgā, as it has been told, by just listening to which sin perishes at that moment only. He who would utter (the name) 'Gaṅgā' even from (a distance of) hundreds of yojanas, is freed from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's heaven. O Nārada, the river has risen from the lotus-like feet (of Viṣṇu), is well-known by the name Gaṅgā, and she destroys large heaps of sins. (There are other rivers like) Narmadā, Sarayū, so also the river Vetravatī, Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, Candrā, Vipāsā, Karmanāśinī, Puṣyā, Pūrṇā, Dīpā, Vidīpā and Sūryatejasā.

6-10. A man obtains that fruit which he certainly gets by giving a thousand bulls in a moment by seeing Gaṅgā. This Gaṅgā is especially very meritorious for those who have killed brāhmaṇas. Gaṅgā smites the sins of those who are connected with (i.e. who have fallen into) a hell. O sinless one, a man obtains that fruit just by seeing Gaṅgā which is (obtained) at the time of the lunar eclipse or the solar eclipse. O dear one, as the darkness goes away at the time of sunrise, similarly the sin (of a man) perishes due to the prowess of Gaṅgā. This (Gaṅgā) is always honoured in the world. She is pure. She destroys sins. She is always of the nature of auspiciousness. She was formerly produced by Viṣṇu. She is of a divine form. She is the mother. She is said to be the purifier of the helpless.

11-14. As Viṣṇu is (the best) of the gods, so is Gaṅgā the best river (among the rivers). For those men who regularly bathe in (the month of) Māgha, there is no grief for three hundred kalpas. There is no doubt that having bathed and drunk (water at the holy place by which) Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī flow, a man enjoys salvation.

Mahādeva said:

O lord, the talk which I affectionately do about you is your praise. What I eat is an offering to you. That I go is (due to) my being sent by you. That I sleep quickly at the pair of your lotus-like feet may be (treated as) my prostration (before you) in the manner of a staff. O lord, may you, the lord of the universe be pleased with whatever I do. This is that water of Yamunā, by seeing which, by saluting which, or by holding which on the head, men are freed.

15-18. O you daughter of the Sun, O you great river, men are overpowered by the dangers like poverty, diseases, death, due to the mundane existence, till they do not see your very blue water and hold it on their heads. Today that Gaṅgā, the recollection of which even from (the distance of) a lakh of yojanas instantly cuts off the streams of sins, overcomes the row of sins, the utterance of whose name purifies the world, will luckily come within (our) sight. The path of the divine river is reached with a delighted mind eager to see her. (Even) the first creator went to this divine river. It is not a great wonder that a

bath, offering of sandhyā, a libation of water as the śrāddha ceremony, worship of gods, a śrāddha-ceremony, feeding the brāhmaṇas—all this becomes perfect (in this river) and gives delight to the lord. O Gaṅgā, you are Brahman turned into goddess (Gaṅgā); you give great delight. Accept my materials of worship. Remove my sin. My salutation to you.

19-21. O Bhāgīrathī, O glorious goddess, I salute you who carry the water which is righteousness in a liquid form, which is the essence of the nectar (flowing) from the lotus-like feet of the enemy of Mura, which is a boat of (i.e. helping to cross) the ocean of grief, which is a flight of steps leading to heaven and lauded by men and gods, which removes all sins, which has excellent merits, (and) which is lustrous. O Gaṅgā, O you heavenly river, O you who emancipate the people plunged in the ocean of sins, O you who have destroyed the mass of darkness (of sins) by means of the spotless lustre of your rising waves, O you, who purify the world, O goddess, purify (me) who am overcome with the fear of sins, who am a recipient of your favour; O mother, O you who give shelter to him who has sought it, protect me who am frightened. O (my) heart, O my friend, why do you trouble? I am alarmed due to the fear of (falling into) hell. 'Why do you fear?' Thus are the words heard of (i.e. uttered by) a sinner in the hell. Do not be afraid. If I have secured her who competes with the mountain (i.e. mass) of sins, then listen to my course (i.e. the course I shall have). How then will I have hell? What else do I have (as) righteousness or wealth?

22-23. In it (i.e. in the water of Gaṅgā) bathing is said to be the experience of joy due to the praise of the lord of all and others; seeing it the divine women are delighted due to the possibility of meeting gods and their lord. O daughter of Jahnu, those who engaged in curbs and restraints bathe in your water, clearly obtain godhead. Even those who do bad deeds (also secure godhead). In this (matter), the Vedas are the authority. O (my) intellect, may you have good thoughts like this. O (my) mind, well-being to you. O (my) feet, may you two be always remaining at the place (of the lord). May the eyes see well. O (my) speech, O you dear to me like my own life, may you, with the body of your virtues manifested, obtain the nourishment of

beings, so that through all of you I obtained (i.e. would obtain) the agreeable, incomparable merit due to the holy place.

24-32. O best sacred place Prayāga, the ornament of the three rivers, viz. Śrī Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī, O lord of all, favour me. Take me up (to heaven). With your lustre destroy the darkness of ten kinds. O you lord of speech, O lord of pious men, that lord of the holy places, viz. Prayāga, whose white and blue bank the gods like Indra, the best among the learned resort to for the destruction of their sins is victorious. That lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, where the divine river (i.e. Gaṅgā) having had confluence with Yamunā, shakes off the three torments of the people like the one relating to the self, is victorious. That lord of the holy places, viz. Prayāga, where the sacred fig tree, of a dark colour[1], covers (the place) with its darkish shadow, and cuts off (i.e. removes) the dark (i.e. great) fatigue of the people when it is seen, is victorious. That lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, the portion of religious merit, which Brahmā and others resort to after abandoning their act, and where Yama will cast his staff, is victorious. That lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, resorting to which gods and divine sages—deities among men—do not care for heaven and the best kingdom on the earth, is victorious. It is well-known that (the holy place, Prayāga) destroys sins and that discerning takes place by the splendour of its name. That is the lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, which holds all around the charming beauty of the chowries, where the white and black excellent rivers (i.e. Gaṅgā and Yamunā) meet, where the primitive fig tree exceedingly shines like an umbrella, is victorious. That lord of the holy places, viz. Prayāga, where at the confluence[2] of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī (that is underground) they take those who bathe there to the position of Brahmā merely by means of their offering sacrifice with sacred rice grains is victorious.

33-35. (That is the holy place Prayāga to go) where many persons of good words pass a crore of lives saying, 'I (shall) go,

1. Śyāma: Name of a sacred fig-tree at Allahabad on the bank of Yamunā.

2. Triveṇī: The place near Prayāga where Gaṅgā joins Yamunā and receives unerground Sarasvatī.

I (shall) go'. Excellent years of those who long for the fixed one may pass there. He who cannot be described by words, and who is reached through lakhs of fortunate (occurrences), becomes ours (i.e. favours us) at Prayāga. Prayāga where sacrifices move (i.e. take place constantly) and which is marked by confluence (of the three rivers) becomes the guest of our sight (only) through good luck. Brahmā and others, after having properly and fully thought about the fruit of (sacrifices like) the horse-sacrifice, have prescribed this dear Prayāga for those men who long for heaven, who are worried as to how to reach the position of gods by means of hymns of the eulogy of the glory and hymns of praise (of gods), and who are unable to perform sacrifices in the Kali age. I have not performed the sandhyā (prayer) due to faults like carelessness and impatience. Let the sandhyā of me who am performing it here be accomplished for my entire life. Elsewhere also he, meditated upon in a penance where his greatness is loudly proclaimed by the distant people with love continuously gives the desired position without any expectation.

36-37. I salute in my heart that Prayāga which is surrounded by the confluence of the three rivers, the rich dust of which is incomparable, which is the lord of holy places, which shines with the presence of several (rivers), which itself is an excellent deity. Have we practised good penance, have we performed sacrifices, have we given various kinds of gifts to worthy recipients, have we worshipped gods, have we resorted to a good holy place, have we honoured a group of good brāhmaṇas, due to which we have reached that capital of Śiva which gives happiness?

38-41. Due to my good fortune of many existences I have had (i.e. reached) the city of Śiva, which destroys all sins, which is full of all wonders, and which is a boat to cross the ocean of the mundane existence. I have received the fruit of a good birth. (My) family is made pure. My soul is purified. (Thus) everything for me has been done. What else is there that stands above all? Since what is said, viz. 'A living man sees a lakh of good things' is not false, I have physically reached Kāśī with my transitory sight. The counting and worship of the sacred places and phalluses of the lord (found) in Kāśī, the divine land, cannot be done even by gods. With my hands joined, I

salute the ancient pious (places), which are secret or open here (i.e. in Kāśī). O men, what is the use of the fear from the multitude of sins, what is the use of the joy due to innumerable meritorious deeds done (by you), what is the use of the pride due to the study of the lores, what is the use of dejection due to the fault of dullness, what is the use of the pride due to prosperity, what is the use of being tormented due to poverty, if the lord of the universe is seen after bathing in the water of Śrī Maṇikarṇikā?

42-49. Since that city of Gadādhara, which though it has little (worldly) affluence, (though) it is small, is not reached even by desires, is not the object of even a dream, but which is reached by means of the power rich with enthusiasm, which is accompanied by the attachment of the mind and the practicability of which is possibly manifest, instantly gives salvation. I think that it is not my act, it is not the strength of the acquisition of an ancestor, it is not the unmoving authority of my kinsmen; how then can it be numbness or torment (which has brought me here)? Reaching Gaṅgā, Prayāga, Yamunā, Kāśī difficult to reach, on the coming of a good occasion—for that the favour of Śāradā, giving a great fruit, is triumphant. I salute that Gadādhara who is actually present in Gayā, and who even though remembered from a distance at the time of a śrāddha, gives salvation to the manes. A man with a potsherd and pitiable words, after having come from a remote place and after having trodden the path that is difficult to cross, and that is crowded with hostile (factors like) mean tigers, hyenas, thorns and snakes, should first solicit the immutable one; (for) O you rich Gadādhara living in water, he longs to see you every day. How do you, pleasing the deities and the universe by showing yourself as a result of the śrāddha at Gayā, resort, like an indifferent (person) to this apathy? O Gadādhara, I have performed the śrāddha through your favour. O god, (now) allow me to go home. The eulogy of the four deities gives the wealth of heaven. A man should recite it at the time of śrāddha. A man should recite it at the time of bathing every day. Due to the listening to it, reciting it and muttering it the bath is equal to the bath at all holy places. O brāhmaṇa, the sins due to (one's) deeds perish by listening to the praise of Prayāga, Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

The Importance of Tulasī

Mahādeva said:

1-5a. O Nārada, listen. I shall tell you the importance of Tulasī, having heard which a man is free from sin from his birth to his death. Everything of Tulasī including leaves, flowers, fruits, roots, branches, skin, and stem is purifying, so also the clay (where) Tulasī-plant grows. Those whose bodies are burnt with the Tulasī-wood (are free from sins), so also he on whose dead body the Tulasī-wood is placed and who (i.e. whose dead body) is cremated after doing so, is freed from sins. He who at the time has (heard) the narration (of the virtues) or the recollection of Viṣṇu, and who is cremated with the Tulasī-wood is not reborn.

5b-11a. If among hundred (pieces of any other kind of) wood, there is (just) one (piece) of Tulasī-wood (in the funeral pyre), the man would have salvation just at the time of cremation—even if he has committed a crore of sins. By being sprinkled with the water of Gaṅgā, religious merit becomes meritorious. (Pieces of) wood become meritorious (when) mixed with Tulasī-wood. As long as the funeral pyre mixed with Tulasī-wood is burning, all his sins committed during crores of kalpas are burnt. Seeing (the dead body of) a man being burnt with the Tulasī-wood, Viṣṇu's messengers take him (to Viṣṇu's world) and not Yama's servants. Freed from thousands of crores of existences, he goes to Viṣṇu. On those men seated in aeroplanes, who (i.e. whose dead bodies) are burnt with Tulasī-wood, gods drop handfuls of flowers. All the celestial damsels sing and singers sing songs.

11b-21. Seeing him, Viṣṇu, along with Śiva, is pleased. Taking him by his hand and physically taking him to his house Viṣṇu would clean all his sins in the presence of gods after having celebrated a great festival along with cries of victory. The sin of men is burnt in the fire-chamber or crematory when the fire of Tulasī-wood is burning with clarified butter. Those men who perform a sacrifice with the fire of Tulasī-wood, would obtain the fruit of an Agniṣṭoma sacrifice for every sesamum-

seed that is offered (into the fire). A man who offers the incense of a (piece of) Tulasī-wood to Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit similar to that of a hundred sacrifices (or that of the gift) of a hundred cows. That food which a man cooks as an offering of eatables to the deity with the fire made from Tulasī-wood, is indeed offered to Viṣṇu. O lord, he who offers one lamp (lighted from) the Tulasī-wood to Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit of the religious merit earned by (the offering of) thousands of lakhs of lamps. There is no devotee seen on the earth like him who offers the sandal (-like paste) of Tulasī-wood to Kṛṣṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, he becomes fit for the favour of Viṣṇu. Having devoutly smeared Viṣṇu with the sandal(-like paste) obtained from Tulasī-wood in the Kali-age, he always enjoys in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. He who with his body smeared with the paste from Tulasī-wood, worships Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit of having given a hundred cows in one day—(a fruit) of the worship offered for a hundred days.

22-27. Listen (i.e. note that), the fruit of the religious merit remains as long as the sandal(-like paste) from the Tulasī-wood, used for smearing the image of Viṣṇu, remains in the temple. The same fruit as the religious merit a man would obtain by giving eight prasthas of sesamum-seeds, is obtained by the favour of Viṣṇu. If a man gives (i.e. puts) a Tulasī-leaf on the piṇḍa offered to the manes, then for every leaf (that is thus offered) the manes are contented for a hundred years. A man should especially bathe with (i.e. after applying to his body) the clay at the root of Tulasī. As long as the clay is on the body, he has bathed at a holy place. When a man worships with the shoot of it (i.e. Tulasī), he has performed the worship with many flowers (and it lasts) as long as the moon and the sun (shine in the sky). All that sin like (that due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa perishes by touching or seeing (the plant) when there is a garden of Tulasī (-plants) in one's house. Even by seeing it, O Nārada, all that (sin) perishes.

Mahādeva said:

28-33. Now I shall tell you something else. Listen (to it) with a concentrated mind (i.e. attentively). O best of the divine sages, I have not told it to anyone (else). In whichever house, village or grove there would be the Tulasī(-plant), Viṣṇu, the

lord of the world, being pleased, would stay there. In that house where there is a Tulasī(-plant) there is no poverty, no (hostile) action due to (i.e. from) the kinsmen, no grief, no fear, and no disease. Everywhere Tulasī(-plant) is auspicious, and especially so in a sacred place. Due to its being planted on the earth, it is always in the vicinity of that god (i.e. Viṣṇu). When Tulasī is planted (by men) they eternally get Viṣṇu's position. When Tulasī is devoutly worshipped, Viṣṇu pacifies portents, fearful diseases and many ill-omens. Wherever the wind goes (i.e. the breezes blow) after taking the fragrance of Tulasī, (all) the ten quarters are (thereby) purified, so also the aggregate of beings of four kinds.

34-46. O best sage, the deities, Śiva, Viṣṇu always reside in that house in which there is the clay (taken from) the root of the Tulasī(-plant). At its root is Brahmā. In the middle is god Viṣṇu. Rudra stays in the sprout. Therefore, Tulasī is purifying. All that sprinkling himself with water which a man does at the time of the sandhyā (prayer) is snatched by demons, and gives (i.e. takes) him (to) hell. He who carries on his head the water dropping from the Tulasī-leaf obtains the fruit of (having bathed in) Gaṅgā and would get the fruit of a gift of a hundred cows. If he especially plants a Tulasī(-plant) in the temple of Śiva, he would stay in heaven for as many yugas as is the number of the seeds (of Tulasī). Formerly goddess Pārvatī had planted a hundred Tulasī-trees (i.e. plants) on the Himālaya for Śaṅkara. I bow down to Tulasī. A man should plant (a Tulasī-plant) on a parvan day (i.e. the day of the four changes of the moon), on (any other) occasion or in Śrāvaṇa, or on a Saṁkrānti-day. Tulasī gives great religious merit. A poor man who worships Tulasī daily would be rich. The image of Viṣṇu, bringing about every kind of success, gives fame also. Viṣṇu is present there where there is a Śālagrāma stone. Bath and (giving) gifts there is hundred times superior to (doing so) at Vārāṇasī. The religious merit is a crore of times superior to (a visit to) Kurukṣetra, Prayāga, and Naimiṣāraṇya. All that religious merit which can be had at Vārāṇasī, would be (secured) there where the mark of the form of Śālagrāma is present. By means of the worship of a Śālagrāma stone, a man would quickly destroy all that sin due to the killing of a brāhmaṇa etc.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

The Importance of Prayāga

Mahādeva said:

1-8a. I shall tell you, as I have heard, the greatness of Prayāga where live people who are intent upon giving large gifts and practise meritorious acts. That holy place (called Prayāga) where (i.e. by which) Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī are (flowing) is the best and is inaccessible even to gods. Such (a holy place) was never there (in the past) nor will be there (in the future). The excellent, holy place called Prayāga is best among all the holy places as the Sun is among the planets or the Moon among the stars. O learned one, he who would bathe in the morning at Prayāga, is free from great sins, and goes to the highest position. A man desiring absence of poverty should give something (to a brāhmaṇa at Prayāga). There is no doubt that a man who after going would bathe there, becomes rich and lives a long life. A man who sees the undecaying fig-tree there, (his sin due to his having committed) the murder of a brāhmaṇa perishes. That fig-tree is called *Akṣaya-vaṭa* and is (i.e. will be) seen even at the end of the kalpa.

8b-13. Since Viṣṇu lies on its leaf, it is known to be immutable. Men dear to Viṣṇu, worship (the lord) there. A man should get it worshipped (i.e. should worship it) after having covered it with a thread. The god called Mādhava (i.e. Viṣṇu) always stays there happily. One should see (the image of) him. One then is freed from great sins. Gods, sages, and men having resorted to their own places, always stay there everywhere. A man who has killed a cow, or who is a cāṇḍāla, who is wicked or of a wicked mind, or who has murdered a child, so also who is not learned, dying there becomes one having four hands and lives in Vaikuṇṭha for a long time.

14-19a. O best among the divine sages, listen. A man who bathes at Prayāga during the month of Māgha, has no (limit to the) number of fruits (that he obtains). We hear that *āpaḥ* (i.e. waters) is said to be *nārāḥ* (i.e. waters—*āpaḥ* and *nārāḥ* are synonyms) in the entire world. Therefore, he is called Nārāyaṇa. He gives pleasures and salvation to those who have bathed

there. As the Sun is best among the planets, the Moon among the stars, similarly Māgha is the best in (i.e. for) all acts. When in Māgha the Sun is in the Capricornus sign, a bath in the morning, even in the clear water of a very small puddle, gives heaven even to the sinners. O learned one, such an opportunity is rare in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. He too who has made an effort (to bathe) here at Prayāga and would bathe (every day) for three days or five or seven days would grow like the Moon in his family, O best brāhmaṇa.

19b-23. The mobile and immobile living beings, so also human beings and others, go soon to Vaikuṇṭha after having resorted to the holy place of Prayāga. Those sages like Vasiṣṭha and like Sanaka also repeatedly resort to the holy place of Prayāga. There, in the excellent holy place of Prayāga, all (gods like) Viṣṇu, Rudra and Indra live. They recommend giving gifts here, so also observing restraints. After having bathed there and drunk (water) there, there is no rebirth.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

A Three-night Tulasī Vow

Nārada said:

1. Like this, I have, through your favour, heard the greatness of Tulasī. Now tell me the vow of Tulasī (lasting for) three days.

Sadāśiva said:

2-9. O very intelligent brāhmaṇa, listen to this ancient vow, having heard which (a man) gets freed from all sins. There is no doubt about it. Formerly in the Raibhyantara kalpa there was a king (named) Prajāpati. His well-known and very chaste wife was Candrarūpā. She practised this vow giving the fruits of all desires. Her vow, giving (the fruit of) righteousness, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment lasted for three nights. The life of those who have listened to the Tulasī-vow is fruitful.

O Nārada, on the ninth of the bright fortnight of Kārtika, a man should observe restraint, be pious, control his senses and sleep on the (bare) ground. Intending to practise the Tulasī-vow, he, being pure and with his mind controlled, should, as a rule, sleep in the vicinity of a Tulasī-grove. Then at mid-day, he, having bathed in the pure water in a river etc., should duly gratify (with oblations) the manes and deities. He should get fashioned (a) golden (image of) Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī. He, desiring his welfare, should not be dishonest as regards wealth. Then he should get fashioned a pair of garments. The garments should be yellow or white. He should duly commence the propitiatory rite for the nine planets.

10-14. Having put an oblation of rice, barley and pulse boiled for presentation to the gods and the manes, he (then) should offer a sacrifice to Viṣṇu. Having on the twelfth day carefully worshipped the lord of gods, he should duly place a pure pitcher without any bruise with five jewels and with leaves and herbs. On it, in a vessel, he should place (the image of) Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī. He should put it at the root of Tulasī to the accompaniment of Vedic and Purāṇic hymns. He should sprinkle the grove of Tulasī with water only. He should bathe the god of gods, the best one in the world, with the five[1] sweet things (viz. milk, sugar, ghee, curd and honey) (and to the accompaniment of this hymn of solicitation): 'May that lord of gods, the divine one, who is of endless forms, who is of the form of the entire universe, who in the water sustains the creation of the world, who through his Māyā creates the world, be pleased with me'.

15. This is the hymn of solicitation. 'Come on, O Acyuta, O lord of gods, O mass of lustre, O lord of the world. You always remove the darkness. Protect me from the ocean of the mundane existence.'

16. This is the invocatory hymn. Good bath is (given to him) with the five sweet things and with sandal mixed with water, so also with the water of Gaṅgā and other (rivers). 'May Ananta (i.e. Viṣṇu thus) bathed, be pleased.'

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1. **Pañcāmṛta: A collection of five sweet things used in worshipping deities. They are: milk, sugar, ghee, curd, and honey.**

17. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of bathing the image of the deity. 'O god, I have devoutly offered you the smearing with sandal, agaru, camphor and saffron etc. With Lakṣmī, accept it.'

18. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of smearing (the image). 'O Nārāyaṇa, salutation to you, the protector (of me) from the ocean of hell. O you lord of the three worlds, I offer you two auspicious garments.'

19. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of (offering) the garments. 'O Dāmodara, my salutation to you. Protect me from the ocean of the worldly existence. I have offered you the sacred thread. O Puruṣottama, (please) accept it.'

20. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of (offering) the sacred thread. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of offering flowers.

21. 'O lord, I have offered you fragrant flowers like those of mālatī etc. O lord of gods, accept them with love.'

22. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of offering of eatables. 'O lord of gods, accept the betal nuts, the nāga-leaves along with camphor. (Please) accept the tāmbūla.'

23. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of offering a tāmbūla. Having devoutly offered incense, agaru mixed with guggula (a particular fragrant gum resin) he should offer the worship thus. He should use a lamp with (i.e. burning due to) ghee.

24-27. O best among sages, he, being controlled, should prepare various kinds of lamps in front of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa in the vicinity of the Tulasī-grove, and should offer materials of worship to the god holding the disc. On the ninth he should offer the best materials of worship with a coconut for (obtaining) a son; on the tenth he should offer a citron fruit for the accomplishment of religious merit and sensual enjoyment. On the eleventh he should worship the twin deity with a pomegranate. (This would) always destroy his poverty.

28-29. Covering with a piece of cloth, a full plate of metal and a basket full of seven (kinds of) grains and betel nuts, he should offer it to the god to the accompaniment of this (i.e. the following) hymn. O Nārada, listen with a concentrated mind. 'O god, you, with Tulasī, (please) accept this material of worship

always accompanied by a conch, offered by me. O lord of gods, my salutation to you.'

30-35. This is the hymn (to be offered) at the time of offering materials of worship. Having thus worshipped Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, along with Lakṣmī, he should solicit the lord of gods for the fulfilment (of the vow). (He should say): 'O god, I, being free from sensual desires and anger, have fasted by means of this vow. O lord of gods, you alone are my refuge. O god Janārdana, let all that which in (i.e. while practising) this vow I have done (i.e. left) incomplete, be complete through your favour. Salutation to you, O lotus-eyed one; salutation to you who lie in water. O Keśava, through your favour I have practised the vow. O Keśava, O you who destroy the darkness of ignorance, being favourably disposed to me due to this vow, be one who would give me the sight of knowledge.' Then at night (he should) keep awake, should sing songs, read (religious) books along with those who know sounds and art of dancing and with very auspicious and meritorious accounts.

36-43. When it is daybreak, and when the bright sun has arisen, he should devoutly invite brāhmaṇas and offer a śrāddha in the manner of Viṣṇu's devotee. Having fed them, as they like, with sweetened milk and ghee, and having given them tāmbūlas, flowers, sandal etc. along with presents, so also sacred threads, garments, garlands and sandal, he should feed three (brāhmaṇa-)couples (and give them) garments, ornaments and saffron. He should also fill baskets according to his capacity with coconuts, cooked foods, garments and various kinds of fruits. He should make his preceptor and his wife put on the garments and divine ornaments (offered to them). He should worship (them) with sandal and flowers. He should also give a milch-cow along with articles of household use and with presents and garments. Listen to me who am telling you. All that religious merit which men obtain after bathing in all holy places is obtained by them through the favour of the lord of gods. Having enjoyed many pleasures and charming desired objects, he, through Viṣṇu's favour, obtains Viṣṇu's position in the end.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

Gift of Food Praised

Nārada said:

1. Tell me all that: Which things a man desirous of giving (gifts) to brāhmaṇas excellent in merit, should give in this world?

Mahādeva said:

2-6. Having known the truth in the world, listen, O you best among the divine sages. They praise food like this. Everything is settled in food. Therefore, men particularly desire to give food. There was no gift nor there will be a gift like food. The whole world consisting of the immobile and the mobile, is sustained by means of food. In the world food causes vigour. Life depends upon food only. A man desiring his own welfare, should even by troubling his family give eatable food to a magnanimous brāhmaṇa. O Nārada, he who would give food to a brāhmaṇa who asks for it and who is afflicted, is the best among the wise. He should look for his own well-being.

7-15. A wise man who is of a good character, who is free from jealousy, who, after abandoning his anger, gives food to a householder – a brāhmaṇa—who is tired, who is on the road (i.e. who is travelling), who has come at the time (of eating food), obtains happiness that is there in heaven and on the earth. He should not censure the guest. He should never hate him. He should offer food to a brāhmaṇa knowing the Vedas. That gift is superior. He who would give food to a brāhmaṇa who is tired, who is not seen before, and who is travelling, so also to him who is afflicted, would obtain full (merit of) righteousness. The religious merit of that man who would please the manes, gods, brāhmaṇas and guests with foods, is unlimited, O great sage. He who, even after having committed a very great sin, gives food to a suppliant, especially to a brāhmaṇa, is freed from sins. Gift given to brāhmaṇas is inexhaustible (in merit); (gift of) food to a śūdra gives a great fruit. Offering food to a śūdra and to a brāhmaṇa is superior (to any other gift). He should not ask (the brāhmaṇa about his) family, the school of the Vedas to which he belongs, or about his study (of the Vedas).

He should give food (thinking that) here is a brāhmaṇa that seeks (food), so also to a beggarly brāhmaṇa. For a man who gives food, auspicious trees full of the fruits of all desires, are (fruitful) in this world and in heaven he is full of joy.

16-21. O great sage, know those worlds which are (reached by him) by means of giving food. For the magnanimous ones (who give food) aeroplanes of many shapes and forms and endowed with (the fulfilment of) various desires, shine in heaven. (They enjoy) auspicious, golden wells and lakes everywhere. (They rejoice with) sounding vehicles and thousands of pearls. They see mountains full of food. There are (for them) garments and ornaments. There are (for them) rivers flowing with milk and mountains of ghee. There are (for them) palaces shining with white colour, beds bright like gold. They desire, therefore, to give food. So a man should give food. Those worlds are (reached) by the meritorious. Offering food gives great fruit. Therefore, in this world men should especially give food.

CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

Constructing Tanks, Planting Trees etc.

Mahādeva said:

1-8a. Giving water is the best (gift); it is always the best of the gifts. Therefore, a man should get constructed oblong reservoirs of water, wells and tanks. Wells dug for giving water destroy half the sin of a person of bad deeds, who is (later) always engrossed in good deeds. He from the reservoir of water dug by whom cows, brāhmaṇas, and good men always drink water, emancipates his family. (He too emancipates his family) in whose reservoir remains water in summer, which is never obtained in an inaccessible place and a place risky and difficult (to reach). I shall (now) tell you which are said to be the merits of the tanks that are constructed. He who has (constructed) a tank is honoured everywhere in the three worlds. The establishment of tanks is like a friendly house, increasing friends and

friendship, producing fame and the best. A tank, which is well-constructed in a country, in a sacred place, and which is a great resort, is, the wise say, the fruit of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (worldly prosperity) and *kāma* (sensual enjoyment). (While constructing) a tank, one should have in view the four kinds of beings.

8b-18a. All the tanks lead to excellent virtue. Gods, men, gandharvas, manes, snakes, demons and immobile beings resort to a tank. He in whose tank there is water in the rainy season, gets the fruit of maintaining the sacred fire. There is no doubt about it. He in whose (tank) there is water in the winter season, obtains the fruit of (the gift of) a thousand cows. There is no doubt. If there is water in his tank in the spring and summer seasons, the wise say, (he gets) the fruit of the Atirātra and horse-sacrifice. Now listen to the merits of planting trees. He who plants them would emancipate both the families (of his father and of his mother), O great sage. Therefore, a man should plant trees. There is no doubt that these trees become (his) sons and grandsons. He too, when he dies, obtains inexhaustible worlds. The trees worship all the hosts of gods with flowers, the manes with leaves, and all guests with their shadow. Kinnaras, serpents, demons, gods, gandharvas, men, so also hosts of sages resort to trees. They, having flowers and fruits, gratify human beings in this world. Here and in the other world, they are the legal sons.

18b-26. Those brāhmaṇas who (construct) tanks, who plant trees and who have performed sacrifices, do not go away from heaven, so also others who tell the truth. Truth alone is the highest Brahman. Truth alone is the highest penance. Truth alone is the greatest sacrifice. Truth alone is the greatest knowledge. Truth is awake among gods; and truth is the highest position. Penance, sacrifices, religious merit, so also worship of deities and guests, the first precept, knowledge—all this is settled in truth. Truth is sacrifice; so also it is charity. It is the hymns. It is goddess Sarasvatī. Truth is practising a vow. Omkāra also is truth. Wind moves due to truth. The sun shines due to truth. Fire burns because of truth. Heaven exists on account of truth. Worship of all gods, bathing at all holy places, are said to be truth. (A truthful man) undoubtedly obtains everything in

the world. If a thousand horse sacrifices and truth are compared, truth certainly is superior to all (kinds of) sacrifices. Gods, manes and sages are pleased by means of truth. They say, truth is the highest duty. They say, truth is the highest position.

27-31. They say, truth is the supreme Brahman; therefore I am explaining truth to you. The sages who were devoted to truth, who were engrossed in practising truth, practised very severe penance, secured divine faculties, and from this world went to heaven in aeroplanes accompanied by beautiful celestial damsels. Always truth should be spoken. There is nothing superior to truth. Men with devoted minds should bathe in a deep, large, divine, holy place or a pure lake. That bath is said to be great. Those men who do not tell lies for their own sake, or for the sake of others, or for the sake of their sons, go to heaven. Vedas, sacrifices, also hymns always abide in brāhmaṇas. They do not become manifest in those who have abandoned truth. Therefore, a man should practise truth.

Nārada said:

32. Tell me specifically the fruit of austerities again.

Mahādeva said:

Of all the castes brāhmaṇas have the power of penance.

33-38. I shall explain to you the meditation with penance, which brings about (i.e. fulfils) all desires, and which is very difficult to practise for brāhmaṇas. Listen to me when I am telling it. Penance is said to be the highest. (A man) gets (his desired) fruit by means of penance. He who is always engrossed in penance, rejoices along with deities. (A man) obtains heaven by means of penance. Glory is obtained by means of penance. (A man) obtains salvation by means of penance. He gets a great (thing) by means of penance. Knowledge, proficiency, wealth, good fortune, (good) form—all this which a man desires mentally, he obtains. Those who have not practised penance never go to Brahmā's world. A man obtains (i.e. succeeds in) all that undertaking here and in the next world taking up which he practises penance. A man who is a drunkard, a man who cohabits with another's wife, a man who kills a

brāhmaṇa, a man who molests his preceptor's wife, crosses over all this (i.e. destroys sins due to these) by means of penance and is totally free.

39-46. Even the lord of gods Śiva, ancient Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Agni, Indra, and others who are endowed with penance, also eightysix thousand sages, abstaining from sexual intercourse, rejoice along with deities in heaven on account of penance By means of penance a kingdom is secured. Formerly Indra, the lord of all, protected all by means of penance and granted their request. The gods—the Sun and Moon—engaged in the welfare of the entire world, shine because of penance only; so also the stars and the planets. He, eating (i.e. subsisting on) wild roots and fruits in the forest, obtains everything and gets every pleasure through penance. O sage, he who first studies Vedas—that (study of the Vedas) is equal to penance. By reciting the chapter the best brāhmaṇa gets double the fruit of the religious merit which he gets by teaching it. O great sage, as the world is without light without the Moon and the Sun, so also (it is lightless) without Purāṇa. Therefore, it should be reflected upon. He who practised penance, has knowledge from sacred texts, enlightens the people.

47-59. Therefore, a preceptor is most venerable of all the worthy recipients (of gifts); the knower of Purāṇas is the best recipient. Since he saves (a man) from falling, he is called a *pātra* (i.e. a worthy recipient). Those who give wealth, grains, gold, and various garments to a worthy recipient go to (i.e. obtain) the best position. Listen to the fruit of him (i.e. which he gets) who gives cows, buffaloes, splendid elephants and horses to the chief (brāhmaṇa). He would obtain the fruit of the horse-sacrifice inexhaustible in all worlds. He who gives him (i.e. the brāhmaṇa reading the Purāṇa), a splendid (piece of) land that is tilled and fertile, emancipates ten preceding and ten succeeding members of his family; and in a divine aeroplane he goes to Viṣṇu's world. Gods are not so much pleased with sacrifices, with sprinklings (of water), with offerings, worships with flowers as they are with the books (of Purāṇas) being read. One who would arrange (the reading of) a religious book in the temple of Viṣṇu, or of the goddess, or of Śambhu, or of Gaṇeśa, so also of the Sun, obtains the fruit of a Rājasūya sacrifice or a horse-sacrifice. The reading of a book (containing stories from) Mahābhārata or Purāṇa is

excellent. He obtains all desired objects and breaks through the world of the Sun. Having broken through the Sun's world, he goes to the world of Brahmā; having lived there for hundreds of kalpas he becomes a king on the earth. He who would read Jaya (i.e. Mahābhārata) before a deity obtains the fruit which is declared to be the fruit of a thousand horse-sacrifices. Therefore, with all efforts, the auspicious reading of a book (containing stories) from Mahābhārata and Purāṇas should be done in Viṣṇu's temple. There is nothing else (except this) that delights Viṣṇu or other residents of heaven.

CHAPTER TWENTYEIGHT

Merit Coming From Exposition of a Sacred Text

Mahādeva said:

1-2. In this case also they relate an old historical account, a Purāṇa, which is highly meritorious, removes all sins, and is auspicious. O divine sage, Brahmā's son (Sanat-)Kumāra, having saluted the grandsire of the worlds, narrated this account to me.

Sanatkumāra said:

3-9a. I went to see Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama). With joy and great devotion he honoured me with words and asked me (to be seated) on a comfortable seat. I who was seated there, saw a great wonder: Dharma, the lord, himself hastily got up from his seat, O best among gods, on seeing a man who had come there in an aeroplane which was golden, the altar in which was made of lapis lazuli, which was beautiful due to gems and pearls, and was charming on account of a mass of small bells. Having taken him by his right hand, he honoured him with materials of worship. Dharma (i.e. Yama), the lord of gods, having smelt him on his head, and having seated him before him, and having honoured him said these words to him: "Welcome to you, O you who know what is right. I am pleased on seeing

you. Be (seated) near me; and give me some knowledge. You will again go to the place where Brahmā is settled."

9b-16. When this was said, another man, seated in an excellent aeroplane came to the place when the lord, Dharmarāja was (seated). He, while he was in the aeroplane (itself), was honoured (by Dharma) who bowed (to him) with respect; and he himself gently spoke to him as he had spoken to the former man. "What deed has he done due to which you are very much pleased? I have a curiosity about this since you yourself honoured him. Then with amazement you also honoured the other man. I think that the two have done auspicious deeds, as the best ones (came in) an aeroplane, and as you honour them for religious merit. Your religious merit is such that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others always worship you. Tell me, O omniscient one, which deed they did, due to which they obtained (this) divine fruit." Hearing those (words of me), he said to me: "Listen to the deed done by these two. O you very intelligent one, listen, due to having performed which worthy deed they have come here."

Dharma said:

17-23. There is on the earth a well-known city named Vaidiśa. A king known as Dharāpāla lived there. Formerly, some time, the goddess angrily cursed her attendant: "Since no other woman than me was married by my husband, you will turn into a jackal for twelve years." That jackal, thus addressed (by her), roamed on the surface of the earth. The Mountain's daughter (i.e. Pārvatī) had told him: "O son, the curse of (i.e. pronounced upon) you will come to an end at the well-known confluence of Vetasī and Vetravatī. He, having fasted there at the holy place, cast his life. Being turned into a divine form, he went into the proximity of Viṣṇu. King Dharāpāla, seeing the great wonder there constructed a Viṣṇu temple and then cast his life at the holy place. Being turned into a divine form he installed (the image) of that lord in that city, and appointed all men to look after him (i.e. the image).

24-33a. The auspicious temple of Viṣṇu in that town is always full of (i.e. crowded with) people. The very intelligent king, full of modesty, having honoured the host of brāhmaṇas,

and especially the (public) reader of Mahābhārata and Purāṇa, who was the best among the brāhmaṇas and greatest due to his learning, so also having worshipped the book (i.e. the Purāṇa text) in due order with flowers etc., said to the reader: "This temple of Viṣṇu before you is constructed (by me). O best brāhmaṇa, this multitude of people of the four castes desiring to listen to it, is (present) here. (Please) read the book (i.e. the Purāṇa text) for one year after taking (money for) excellent livelihood. After that I shall (also) give you another hundred golden niṣkas after the year is over for my well-being, O best brāhmaṇa." Thus he started there the reading of the book. O best sage, after the year was over, and due to the shortening of his life, he went to Kāladharma (i.e. to Yama). Viṣṇu and I sent his aeroplane (i.e. the aeroplane for him) from heaven. This is the fruit of the deeds. He had heard the auspicious, great Padma Purāṇa, entitled 'an account', which is auspicious, pure, and which destroys sins. All gods are not so much pleased with offerings like those of sandal and flowers as they are with the listening to the Purāṇa.

33b-42. All gods will not be so much gratified with all the gifts of objects like gold and jewels or of garments or of villages and towns, as by listening to the religious discourse. O best sage, I have also in the same way a great love for listening to historical accounts (i.e. Mahābhārata) and Purāṇa, which brings about (i.e. fulfils) all desires. O best sage, I very much like the giving of the daughter (in marriage). But I do not like it so much as the reading of a book (i.e. a Purāṇa-text). What is the use of talking much? Nothing else gives me joy except the auspicious account. This is declared to be a secret. O brāhmaṇa, the other best man that had come here, had come due to company. Having listened to a religious text with faith, devotion is created (in his mind) for the highest soul. O best sage, this brāhmaṇa, having gone round the magnanimous reader (of the Purāṇa) keeping him to his right, gave him a māṣaka of gold. Due to his mind overpowered by grief he did not make any other gift at any time. But there is no doubt that he got the fruit due to his having made a gift to a worthy recipient. O great sage, I have told (you) this deed of the two.

Mahādeva said:

43. Those wise men who listen to the greatness of this religious merit never face a calamity in existence after existence.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

The Importance of Gopīcandana

Mahādeva said:

1-13a. Now I shall tell you something else: the importance of (the sandal called) gopīcandana as I saw and heard about it, O best divine sage. A brāhmaṇa, or a vaiśya, or a śūdra, whose body is smeared with gopīcandana is free from the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt that he who puts a mark of gopīcandana (on his body) is free from the sins like drinking etc. A Viṣṇu's devotee, exclusively devoted to Viṣṇu, with his body smeared with gopīcandana, is free from all sins; so also (he is free from sins) due to the water of Gaṅgā. A śūdra or a brāhmaṇa who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or who is a drunkard, so also (a brāhmaṇa) who has stolen gold, who has molested his preceptor's wife, is instantly freed from sins committed during hundreds of existences. Twelve marks are prescribed for all devotees of Viṣṇu; they should be put especially by brāhmaṇas (who are Viṣṇu's devotees) and who desire welfare. It should be of the form of a staff on the forehead; of the form of a lotus on the chest. (It should be) like (the form of) a reed-leaf on the shoulder-blade. The other one should be like the form of a lamp. On the right shoulder-blade there should be four marks like those of wheel above and two ring-like marks below. One of the two (should be of the form of) a conch. He should have two (marks) in the middle, so also on the sides. On the left (shoulder-blade there should also be) a mark of a disc and (marks of) two maces (drawn) separately. On the forehead (there should be the mark of) a mace, so also of a seal-ring on the chest. There should be three beautiful marks and two (marks

of) conches in the middle. On the chest, on the side above the breast, (there should be the marks of) a mace and lotuses as on the arms. At the root of the ear there should be three or four (marks of discs) and two below (it). He should put one (mark) out of other marks.

13b-21a. Following the wise he should put on the mark of his sect. He should put it as he likes, since there is no rule about it. By means of just putting a mark (all) upto a cāṇḍāla are purified. I look upon the reviler of the devotees of Viṣṇu as a greater (sinner) than a cāṇḍāla. He (i.e. a cāṇḍāla) should be looked upon like Viṣṇu. No doubt should be raised in this matter. None (else) should be known to be similar to a brāhmaṇa who is Viṣṇu's devotee and who is devoted to the meditation on Viṣṇu. He would (himself) be Viṣṇu in the world. A brāhmaṇa having (the marks of) a conch and a disc (on his body), and devoted to the study of the Vedas, is (alone) said to be Viṣṇu in the Veda. A brāhmaṇa who has the mark of (i.e. made with) a disc, purifies those brāhmaṇas who purify by their presence the persons who sit in the same row to dine with them. He who is devoted to him is freed from great sins, O brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt that a brāhmaṇa, after having worn the garland of Tulasī-wood, would enjoy salvation. Since a brāhmaṇa is of the form of Viṣṇu, he is said to be Viṣṇu's devotee in this world. He who has a mark of gopīcandana (on his body) at the time of his death gets into an aeroplane and goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu.

21b-26. O Nārada, I shall tell you that those best men who put on the mark of gopīcandana never meet with a calamity. A man who puts (the mark of) a conch and (that of) a disc on his right hand and particularly on the left hand also is freed from great sins. There is no doubt that those who are seen to have indulged in drinking, to have killed women and children, to have practised illicit intercourse, get freed just on seeing the devotees (of Viṣṇu), O brāhmaṇa. How can (one find) devotees of Viṣṇu in this mundane existence of little worth? I have surely become a devotee of Viṣṇu through the favour of Viṣṇu's devotion. There is no doubt that dwelling here in Kāśī and muttering 'Rāma, Rāma', he becomes Śiva due to the contact with that religious merit.

CHAPTER THIRTY

The Greatness of the Vow of Lamp

Nārada said:

1-2. O Śiva, tell me the importance of the vow, the best among all vows, the excellent rite of the lamp called Saṁvatsara, by (doing) which all other vows are undoubtedly practised, all desires are satisfied and all sin would perish.

Mahādeva said :

3-8a. O divine sage, I shall tell you the secret which destroys sins, and listening to which he who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or a cow or a friend, (so also) he who has molested his preceptor's wife, who has been a traitor, who has been cruel, obtains eternal salvation, and having emancipated a hundred families goes to Viṣṇu's world. I shall (now) tell (you) that excellent vow of the lamp lasting for a year, so also the mode of practising it and its greatness. On the auspicious eleventh day of the first month of Mārgaśīrṣa, a man, free from anger and having restrained himself, should, after having got up in the early part of the day, bathe at the holy places on the confluence of rivers or in tanks and rivers or in his (own) house.

8b-10. (He should then recite this hymn:) 'I have taken bath at all the sacred places. Always give me that bath (only).' This is the hymn to be recited at the time of bathing. He, having gratified gods and men, having muttered (the hymns) and with his senses controlled, should worship the lord, the god Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. Having bathed (the image of the deity) with pañcāmṛta and then with sandal and water (he should say): 'God of gods, O lord of the world, you have bathed with Lakṣmī. Emancipate me, O chief of gods, from this fearful bondage of the worldly existence.'

11-15. After that he should devoutly worship Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī by means of Vaidika, so also Paurāṇic hymns. (Then) with the words: 'Therefore, O god, sandal etc. (is offered)' or with the man-composed (hymn like) 'Salutation to Matsya (i.e. the Fish-incarnation), to god, to Kūrmadeva (i.e. the the Tortoise-incarnation), Varāhadeva (i.e. the Boar-incarnation), to Narasiṁha-

deva (i.e. to the Narasiṁha-incarnation), to Buddhadeva, so also salutation to Kalki' he should worship (the lord). 'Salutation to god Rāma, to you god Viṣṇu; salutation to you the soul of all', with this he should worship his head. There are (also other) names like Keśava etc. He may worship Viṣṇu with them. 'O god of gods, this is the divine sap. It is fragrant and has perfume and is pure. This is incense. Salutation to you. Accept it'.

16-17. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering incense. 'The lamp destroys darkness. The lamp gives lustre. Therefore, may Viṣṇu be pleased by this offering of the lamp.' This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering the lamp. 'O god of gods, O lord of the world, this is an offering of eatables like food etc. Along with Lakṣmī accept it which is the excellent and best nectar.'

18-19. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering eatables. Having thus meditated upon Viṣṇu, and having taken water with a fruit, his hand or a conch, he should then devoutly offer materials of worship. 'May all that sin which I committed during a thousand existences, perish due to your favour, O Viṣṇu.'

20-24. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering materials of worship. Then in front of Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu he should take a new white pitcher full of ghee or oil. On it he should put a vessel made of copper or of clay. In that vessel he should offer a wick having nine threads. Having put the pitcher very steadily, he should light the lamp. Then being pure and having worshipped the deity, he should resolve with (the recital of) this hymn in chambers having no breeze, O divine sage: 'This Kāma (i.e. Cupid) shines as the only emperor of what there was and what there will be. I have employed this lamp for a year. O Viṣṇu, may the unceasing sacred fire please you.'

25-28a. Then having curbed his senses and being intent on sacred knowledge, he should not talk to sinful and heretical persons. At night he should keep awake, should have songs and (should keep awake) with dancing, musical instruments etc., so also auspicious texts, various accounts and fasts. Then in the morning, after having performed the rites of the morning, he should devoutly feed brāhmaṇas and worship them according to

his capacity. Having himself broken the fast, he should salute them and dismiss them.

28b-31a. In this way (he should be) of a firm vow for day and night. The lamp should be of (the weight of) one pala of gold or half of it. The wick is said to be made of silver. It should be of the weight of two palas, or more than that by half a pala. A devout man, desiring the gate to salvation, should prepare the pitcher full of ghee and along with the copper vessel; so also he should fashion with gold (the image of) the deity Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa according to his capacity.

31b-36a. Then the wise one should invite best brāhmaṇas. The best alternative is (to invite) twelve (brāhmaṇas). As the middle alternative (he should invite) six (brāhmaṇas). Or he should employ three or (even) one brāhmaṇa who would perform the rite (for him). Having honoured a brāhmaṇa with his wife, who is calm, who performs rites, who especially knows historical accounts and Purāṇas, who is conversant with religion, and having worshipped devoutly Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa as before with the lamp-wicks placed in the copper-vessel and with the pitcher full of ghee, he should give (these things) to a brāhmaṇa after having meditated upon the highest Viṣṇu to the accompaniment of this hymn, O divine sage.

36b-39. I (shall) tell you the hymn: 'O sinless one, I have offered this lamp, since it destroys sins in this mundane existence pervaded by the darkness of ignorance, since it gives knowledge and gives salvation.' This is the hymn (to be recited at the time of offering) the lamp. Having given presents with devotion to the brāhmaṇa, he should then feed the brāhmaṇas with ghee, sweetened milk and sweetmeats. Then he should cover the brāhmaṇa with his wife with garments, and should give him a bed with furniture and a cow with a calf.

40-45. He should give them presents according to his wealth. Similarly he should honour his friends, kinsmen and relatives. Thus he should celebrate a great festival at the time of the end of the vow of the lamp. Then he should dismiss (the deity) and having saluted (it) he should apologise. Men, when they do thus, obtain that fruit—that religious merit—of the lamp maintained for a year which they would get by the Saṁkrānti-rites. By means of observing the vow of the lamp maintained for a year

men get the same religious merit as is obtained by monthly rites. When the lamp is maintained for a year, a man gets that fruit which he obtains by vows of giving gifts and vows of abstract meditation, according to their number.

46-47. A man who offers a lamp to the deity gets the same fruit which a learned man would obtain by means of gifts of cows, land, gold and especially of houses. The giver of a lamp gets brilliance; the giver of a lamp gets inexhaustible wealth; the giver of a lamp obtains knowledge; the giver of a lamp gets supreme happiness. There is no doubt that by offering a lamp a man secures good fortune, very pure knowledge, health and great prosperity.

48-49. A man who offers a lamp would obtain a lovely wife having all (auspicious) marks, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, and undying progeny. A brāhmaṇa (who offers a lamp) would obtain great knowledge, a kṣatriya (who offers a lamp) would obtain excellent kingdom, a vaiśya (offering a lamp would obtain) all (kinds of) wealth and beasts, and a śūdra (offering a lamp would obtain) happiness.

50-55a. A maiden (offering a lamp) obtains a husband endowed with all (auspicious) marks, a long life, and many sons and grandsons. A young woman (offering a lamp) will never experience widowhood. She does not get (i.e. suffer from) separation (from her husband) due to the prowess of the gift of a lamp. Maladies and diseases do not take place due to the gift of a lamp. A man who is frightened, becomes free from fear, and one that is bound gets freed from the bondage. There is no doubt that one devoted to the vow of (offering) a lamp is freed from the sins of (i.e. due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc., for there is the statement of Brahmā to this effect.

55b-61. He who has constantly kept burning a lamp before Viṣṇu, has undoubtedly practised the vows like Cāndrāyaṇa and Kṛcchra. Those who having worshipped Viṣṇu, maintained the lamp for a year, are blessed, are magnanimous, and have obtained the fruit of their existence. Those also who see the wick of the lamp here, go to the highest place, difficult to be obtained even by gods; and those who put, according to their capacity, oil and wick into the lamp, go to the highest position. Those also who are unable to light the lamp that is going out, and inform

others, enjoy the same fruit. He too who begging little oil only for (maintaining) the lamp, keeps the lamp for Viṣṇu, also obtains religious merit. (Even) a mean man who sees the lamp being lighted, and has the palms of his hands joined (in honour) of Viṣṇu, would obtain (i.e. go to) Viṣṇu's world.

62-63. He who would give an idea (to others) to light a lamp (in honour of Viṣṇu), (or) he who himself would do so, is free from all sins, and would obtain (i.e. go to) Viṣṇu's world. In this case also they narrate an ancient account, merely by hearing which a man is free from all sins.

64-72. On the charming bank of Sarasvatī there was (a hermitage) known as Siddhāśrama. Formerly a brāhmaṇa named Kapila, a knower of the Vedas, lived there. He was engrossed in (the practice of) vows and fasts. He was poor and was learned. He maintained his family by begging. He propitiated Viṣṇu by means of vows, fasts and restraints. Having duly worshipped Viṣṇu, he always lighted the lamp. Having taken oil, having worshipped Viṣṇu in his own house, he would light the lamp with great devotion for pleasing Viṣṇu. When (that) magnanimous Kapila was getting along like this, a cat with sharp teeth would always eat mice. He (i.e. the cat) came there day and night to eat mice. He always remained meditating for getting a prey in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu. He ate many mice in the house of the brāhmaṇa. Intent upon meditation, he would eat those mice that came there to (drink) the oil and to take away the wick. When this was going on like this, after some time had elapsed, that pure brāhmaṇa Kapila along with his wife fasted and worshipped Viṣṇu in his house on an Ekādaśī (day).

73-81. Engaged in praising (Viṣṇu) and dancing (in front of his image) he kept awake. When it was midnight, the brāhmaṇa was overcome with sleep. The cat having sharp teeth and going quickly came there; and always remaining in a corner of the house he ate up the eatables offered to the deity. He saw a small female mouse that had come there to drink the oil, and that was used to take away the wick in the dim light. He jumped and attacked her with his foot. Then she entered a hole. Due to (the contact with) her foot the lamp became very bright. The oil-pot was bent and there was good light. The brāhmaṇa too abandoning his stupefying sleep got up. The cat that ate mice,

also kept awake during that night. Then when it had dawned, the brāhmaṇa, having performed his daily rites, broke the fast along with his relatives. That magnanimous Kapila who was going along like this had sons and grandsons. He obtained wealth, grains, excellent health, great prosperity and abundant riches. Having broken through the auspicious orb of the sun, so also of the moon, Kapila came to (secure) salvation through the prowess of the vow of the lamp.

82-84. He got joined (i.e. he merged) in the form of a lustre into the highest soul. The female mouse also died in the hole in (course of) time. Getting into an excellent aeroplane, she went to the world of Viṣṇu. The cat too died after (some) time and went to heaven. Having got into an excellent aeroplane waited upon and surrounded by celestial nymphs, accompanied by hosts of vidyādharas, being praised with auspicious cries of victory by serpents he went to the world of Viṣṇu.

85-91a. Having enjoyed many pleasures for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas he became a king on the earth by name Sudharman who was religious-minded, who worshipped gods and brāhmaṇas, who was handsome, who was fortunate and who was very mighty and brave. His wife, most dear to him, was endowed with all (auspicious) marks, was devoted to her husband, and was of a good character. Her name was Rūpasundarī. She was the most beautiful among all ladies. Many sons and many daughters were born (to them). When the couple was thus enjoying (in each other's company) with love, the month of Kārtika opening Viṣṇu's eyes (i.e. making him awake) arrived. During that (month) lamps are lighted by those who are devoted to Viṣṇu. So also those devotees of Viṣṇu who are afraid of the worldly existence practise vows like Kṛcchra and Cāndrāyaṇa and restraints.

91b-94. When the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) arrived, the king said to the queen: "O good one, in the lotus from the navel of Viṣṇu it is the auspicious Prabodhinī. With my senses controlled through fast, I shall today worship (Viṣṇu). Having bathed in the holy place of Puṣkara, I shall worship the imperishable lord of gods having lotus-like eyes, along with Lakṣmī." Having heard these desired words, she who was engaged in the well-

being of her husband and who smiled charmingly, said (these) secret words to her husband:

Rūpasundarī said:

95-100a. O king, desire is also produced in my heart. I too have a desire for form and beauty. I desire to go with you to the best sacred place, Puṣkara.

Then the king, along with her, and with groups of elephants, horses and chariots and with family-priests came to Puṣkara. Then having bathed (there) he, meditating (on Viṣṇu) and gratifying manes and deities, worshipped the imperishable lord of gods, the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu). There, in the very charming temple, full of rows of lights everywhere, he saw the cat drawn (in a picture). Seeing that, the king remembering his former deeds and existence, looked at the lotus-like face of his beloved, and smiled.

Rūpasundarī said:

100b-101a. O lord, why did you smile after looking at my face?

Seeing the fruit of his former deed, he said (to her):

The king said:

101b-103. O queen, formerly (i.e. in the previous existence) I was a cat in the house of a brāhmaṇa. There I ate hundreds and thousands of mice. Since, even under a pretext, I guarded the lamp in front of Viṣṇu, I got, O Queen, fruit of that deed. Having reached Viṣṇu's world, I have now obtained the kingdom.

Rūpasundarī said:

104-108. I too had the recollection of my former deeds and existence. I too was a small female mouse in the house of the brāhmaṇa. On the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika, when the light had become dim, I went out of the hole to snatch the wick. Seeing (the image of) the god Viṣṇu worshipped with flowers, and the brāhmaṇa overcome with sleep, I then dragged the wick. When you, taking an opportunity to seize me, got up, I

saw you and ran into the hole. With the foot of me who was entering (the hole) the wick of the lamp spread out, the oil-pot also bent down and I was happy.

109-115. O lord of great kings, since I brightened the lamp at that time, I have now secured excellent beauty; you are my husband, (I have obtained) kingdom, sons and (great) happiness like that. Due to my brightening the lamp I secured knowledge which is extremely difficult to obtain. Therefore, with all efforts and with great devotion, we have especially practised the vow of the lamp. So we have received the fruit of the deed, viz. the riches like the kingdom etc. We remembered our former existence and so also all our sins have perished. Therefore, men have practised with all efforts and proper rites and hymns the vow of the lamp which is auspicious and resembles the Sun, the Moon and stars.

Hearing this, O divine sage, the king full of faith properly practised the vow of the lamp with his wife. Having practised the vow of the lamp at the holy palce of Puṣkara, the two obtained the great salvation difficult to be obtained by gods and demons.

116-120. Those men who on the earth listen to this greatness (of the vow) of the lamp, are free from all sins, and go to Viṣṇu's abode. And those men or those women who being intent upon it, devoutly practise it are all free from sins and go to ancient Brahman. O learned one, I have told you about this vow of the lamp which gives salvation, which gives all happiness, which is virtuous, and which is a great vow. Diseases of the eye, so also maladies and (other) diseases of the body perish in a moment, when it is practised. O brāhmaṇa, there is no poverty, no grief, no delusion, no illusion. Prosperity comes to the house in every existence.

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

The Vow of Janmāṣṭamī

Nārada Said:

1. O god of gods, O lord of the world, O you who grant fearlessness to your devotees, having favoured me tell me about the vow (of Janmāṣṭamī), O Mahādeva.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

2-12a. Formerly there was king Hariścandra who was a sovereign emperor. Brahmā pleased with him gave him an auspicious city which satisfied all desires, which was full of all gems, which was divine and lustrous like the young sun. Having stayed in it, the king righteously protected the earth with seven islands, as a father protects his legitimate son. The king having great wealth and corn, and having sons and daughters, and being very proud protected that auspicious kingdom. Nobody before (him) had such a kingdom anywhere (in the world). No other men also ever got into such an aeroplane (as he did). 'Of which act (of mine) is this the fruit that I am (enjoying) like the lord of gods?' Being engrossed in thinking like this, the excellent king seated in an excellent aeroplane saw the Meru, the best of mountains. The magnanimous one, as it were the other sun, was there. The king, having seen on the excellent mountain, on the golden strip of the mountain, Sanatkumāra, the brāhmaṇic sage, exclusively devoted to abstract meditation, got down with a desire to ask him about the wonder. Being delighted, he saluted his feet. He too greeted him. The king, who was seated comfortably, asked the best sage: "O lord, the wealth like the one that I possess, is difficult to obtain in the world. Due to which deed would it be obtained? Who was I in the former existence? If I deserve favour from you then tell me the truth."

Sanatkumāra said:

12b-20. O king, listen. I shall tell you the cause of your former behaviour, having practised which you were specially favoured. In your previous existence you were a good, pure vaiśya who spoke the truth. You gave up your duty; therefore

you were abandoned by your kinsmen. That you (i.e. you reduced to that condition), weak (i.e. unable) to maintain yourself, abandoned your relatives and went out, followed by your wife, to serve someone. But at that time (every man) was oppressed by famine, (so) nobody gave you a job. Then in a forest you saw a lake with the lotuses blooming. Then you had a thought: 'Let us take the lotuses.' Saying so, and taking them at every step they resorted to in the auspicious, meritorious city named Vārāṇasī. Then nobody purchased the lotuses. Somebody went out from the temple and stood in the courtyard. Entering that place he heard the sound of musical instruments. 'In which place (i.e. from which place) is the sound of the musical instruments being heard?' When he asked like this and was told that it was the sound from a musical instrument, he went ahead a (little) distance. There was king Indradyumna, the well-known king of Kāśī.

21-30. His well-known daughter was Candrāvatī by name, who was virtuous. The noble one had fasted on the auspicious day—the eighth day (of the month)—the day of the birth anniversary (of Kṛṣṇa). That vaiśya came there where she, the one, remained. His mind was pleased, and great joy came there. At that place you saw the sacred rite in honour of the deity, where lord Viṣṇu is worshipped along with the Sun. You and your wife worshipped him devoutly with flowers. The other made a heap of flowers there. Seeing that she, who was amazed, said: "Oh, who has made this worship?" Knowing all her act you also had protected all that. Then, she, being pleased, gave you much wealth. You did not accept the wealth. You were invited to a meal. You did not take the wealth or the meal at that time. The Sun, along with Viṣṇu, was duly worshipped. Then in the morning, you, always being looked after by her, having produced familiarity with them all, went out as you liked. This (then) is the good deed done by you in the previous existence. According to (the fruit of) your deeds, you died. Due to that great religious merit, an aeroplane came at that time. O king, you are enjoying the fruit of the deed which you did in the former existence.

Hariścandra said:

31. If I deserve to be favoured by you then tell me in what manner and in which month that day (of Aṣṭamī) is to be celebrated.

Sanatkumāra said:

32-40. Listen attentively, O king, to what is being told to you by me. If in the month of Śrāvaṇa on the eighth of the dark half Rohiṇī is seen (in the sky) then that day is named Jayantī (day). O great king, it would be the cause for existence again and again. I shall narrate to you the manner of (observing) it as I was told by Brahmā, doing (i.e. observing) which a man being free from sins, goes to Viṣṇu's world. Then having fasted and then bathed with (water) with black sesamum-seeds, he should instal a scratchless pitcher with five jewels. Kātyāyana said that these five jewels, viz. diamonds, pearls, lapis lazuli, topaz and sapphires are recommended. On it he should place a golden pot with (auspicious) marks. In it he should place the golden (image of) Yaśodā, Nanda's wife, giving a suck to her son and with a smile on her face. As his capacity is (i.e. permits), he should get fashioned a golden (image of the) god, sucking one breast of the mother, and touching the other with his hand, and looking at the mother with love and pleasing her again and again. If he has the capacity he should have the image (weighing) just two niṣkas, or of iron (weighing) three (niṣkas) or of gold also.

41-45. In the same way, he should fashion a golden (image of) Rohiṇī and a silver one of the Moon. The (image of the) Moon should be of the size of a thumb only, and (that of) Rohiṇī (should be of the size of) four fingers. He should place ear-rings on the ears and a neck ornament round the neck (of the image). Having done so, he should bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) along with (that of) his mother with milk etc. and smear them with sandal. He should cover (the image) with a white garment, and decorate it with garlands of flowers. Along with offerings of eatables and various varieties of fruits, he should put a lamp there decorated with an arbour of flowers. The devoted one should make the wise ones sing, dance and

play on musical instruments. Having done the rite according to his wealth, he should worship his teacher and should then bring the worship to an end.

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

A Gift of Land Is the Best

Mahādeva said:

1-9. Seeing the Śatakratu completed and accomplished with excellent presents, Indra, in whose mind a thought had arisen, asked Bṛhaspati: "O you glorious one, O you of a great penance, tell me about that inexhaustible and very valuable gift by means of which a man gets happinsss everywhere." Thus addressed by Indra, that family priest (of the gods), the god of gods and the very wise Bṛhaspati said: "O Indra, he who gives the gift of gold, or of a cow, or of (a piece of) land, becomes free from all sins. All (this) viz. gold, silver, a garment, a gem, a jewel would be (said to be) given by him who gives (a piece of) land. By giving land that is tilled with a plough, that contains seeds and is shining with corn, a man is honoured in heaven as long as there is the light cast by the sun. That sin, whichever a man overpowered by his livelihood commits, is purified by the gift of land of the measure of a *gocarma*. *Daṇḍa* is of the measure of ten cubits. Thirty daṇḍas make a *vartana*. Ten such (vartanas) make a *gocarma*. This is the definition of *brahmagocarma*. That land where a thousand cows that have calved young calves and that are with bulls, remain uncontrolled, is known as *gocarma*.

10-14. He should give it to a brāhmaṇa endowed with virtues, possessing penance, and with his senses controlled. He would get its infinite fruit as long as the earth begirt by the ocean remains. As a drop of oil fallen into water spreads, in the same way, O Indra, the gift of (a piece of) land spreads in every grain. As the seeds scattered on the earth grow, similarly the desires accompanied by the gift of land, grow (i.e. become fruitful). The givers of food are always happy. One who gives a

garment would be handsome. That man who gives (a piece of) land repeatedly gives all.

15-17. O Indra, as a milch-cow feeds her calf by sending out milk, in the same way the land that is given (to a brāhmaṇa) feeds the giver of it. A conch, an auspicious seat, an umbrella, excellent horses and fine elephants (*obscure*). The fruit of the religious merit of the gift of land is heaven, O Indra. The Sun, Varuṇa, Fire, Brahmā, the Moon, Hutāśana (i.e. fire), the lord with the trident in his hand greet the giver of land. His manes clap (with delight) and the grandsires describe (his gift), 'In our family the giver of land is born. He will emancipate us.'

18-20. The three are said to be superior gifts: cows, land and knowledge. These lift (a man) from hell by means of muttering, sowing seed and milking. O brāhmaṇa, if they are taken up by the learned they help to cross a calamity. Those that give garments, go (to heaven with their bodies) covered. Those who do not give garments go naked. The givers of food go with gratification. Those who do not give food go hungry.

21-25a. All the manes frightened due to the fear of (falling into) hell say: 'That (our) son who will go to Gayā will be our emancipator.' Many sons should be desired, so that at least one of them would go to Gayā. He would perform the horse-sacrifice, or would give a 'nīla' bull. That bull which is red in colour, whitish at the tip of its tail, white at the hoofs and tail, is called 'nīla'. By means of the water which the 'nīla' bull, of a whitish tail, splashes, the manes are gratified for sixty thousand years; and by means of the mud which is on the horns, the family is emancipated; and his manes obtain (i.e. go to) the very bright world of Soma (i.e. the Moon).

25b-30a. It was (reached) by king Dilīpa, Nṛga and Nahuṣa; but none of the other kings reached it. Many kings like Sagara, gave (the gift of) land. Whenever he gave (the gift of) land he got its fruit (just) then. That (gift of land) destroys the sin (of one) who kills a brāhmaṇa, who murders a woman, who kills a child, who is fallen, or the killer of thousands of cows. He who takes away the land given by him or by someone else, becomes an insect in the feces, and is roasted along with his manes. The giver of land remains in heaven for sixty thousand years; and the one who strikes him (soliciting land) and who consents to (the

suppliant being struck) would go to (and live in) hell for that much period.

30b-37. None else is more meritorious or a greater sinner than the giver of land or the snatcher of it (respectively). They remain above (i.e. in heaven) and below (in hell) till the deluge. The first child of Fire is gold; the earth is (the child) of Viṣṇu; the cows are the Sun's daughters. He would obtain an unending fruit of (these gifts); so also he who would give gold, or a cow or (a piece of) land. He who receives (a piece of) land, he who gives it, both are meritorious, and certainly go to heaven. Those who snatch (a piece of) land or those who have caused (others) to snatch it unjustly would destroy their family (upto) the seventh member (i.e. descendant). He, a dull one and covered by (i.e. full of) ignorance, who snatches or causes someone else to snatch (a piece of land), is bound by the nooses of Varuṇa and is born in the stocks of lower animals. The gifts are censured along with the tears that are shed. The family up to three descendants perishes when the land of a brāhmaṇa is taken away. One who snatches (a piece of) land is not purified (even) by (digging) a thousand wells and tanks, or by performing a hundred horse-sacrifices, or by giving a crore of cows.

38-39. Whatever good deed is done, whatever gift is given, whatever penance is practised, whatever study is done, whatever is meritorious perishes by taking away (the portion of) the border (of a piece of land) of the measure of half a finger. He who oppresses (i.e. snatches) a (pasture)—a sacred land of cows, (a portion of) the road in the village, or (a portion of) cremation ground goes to hell (and remains there) till deluge.

40-44. A man kills five (members of his family) if he tells a lie with regard to his daughter, kills ten if he lies about a cow, kills a hundred if he tells a lie about a horse, and (kills) a thousand by telling a lie about a man. The liar with regard to gold kills those that are born and those that are not (i.e. are yet to be) born. He kills (i.e. destroys) everything by lying about land. (Therefore) do not tell a lie pertaining to land. Even if the life is on the point of departing, a man should not show interest in a brāhmaṇa's wealth. Those that are (duly) burnt with fire (after their death) go up. The one who is burnt by (the curse of) a brāhmaṇa, does not go up. Those who are burnt by fire, go up;

so also those who are scorched up by the sun; so also those who are struck by the sceptre of the king or by the curse of a brāhmaṇa. The limbs nourished by a brāhmaṇa's wealth, repeatedly waste away as the heat wastes away due to sand.

45-49a. A man who snatches the wealth of a brāhmaṇa goes to (the) Raurava (hell). Poison is not called poison; (but) a brāhmaṇa's wealth is called poison. Poison kills one(only), (but snatching) a brāhmaṇa's wealth kills one's sons and grandsons. A man may digest iron-powder, or stone-powder, or (even) poison. But which man will digest a brāhmaṇa's wealth in the three worlds? That wealth which through (snatching of) a brāhmaṇa's wealth gives happiness or which through (snatching away) the wealth belonging to (the temple of) a deity gives joy, leads to the destruction of the family and to that of oneself. A brāhmaṇa's wealth, the murder of a brāhmaṇa, the wealth of a poor man, the gold of the preceptor or friend would trouble a man even while (he is) living in heaven.

49b-53a. O best god, that (wealth) which is given to a brāhmaṇa who is contented, who is modest, who is accompanied by the essence of everything, who is endowed with Vedic studies, penance, knowledge and control of senses, is inexhaustible. As milk, curd, ghee or honey put in an unbaked pot splits due to the weakness of the pot, but the pot does not perish, similarly, an ignorant man who receives a cow, gold, a garment, food, land and sesamum-seeds, becomes reduced to ash like wood.

53b-61a. He who would construct a new lake or would get an old one dug up, emancipates his entire family and is honoured in heaven. Wells, tanks, lakes or (trees etc.) growing in gardens, if improved again, give a pearl-like fruit. O Indra, he who has water (to give to others) in (even) the summer season, would never meet with a difficulty, a danger or an evil. O best god, water remaining on the earth (even) for a day, would emancipate seven members preceding (and succeeding) him. The man (offering a lamp) would be of a strong body by means of the light of the lamp. By giving presents he obtains memory and intelligence. He who, even after having done a sinful act, would give to a deserving person, especially a brāhmaṇa. is not smeared with sins. He who does not report when (a piece of) land, cows, or a servant are forcibly snatched is called the killer of a brāh-

maṇa. He who, when a marriage is about to take place, or at the time of a sacrifice or gift, creates obstacle through delusion, becomes an insect after death.

61b-71. Wealth becomes fruitful by giving (a portion of it); life becomes fruitful by saving (another) life. Harmlessness gets (as) its fruit handsomeness, prosperity and good health. A man gets (the fruit of) worship by eating fruits and roots. Heaven is obtained through truthfulness. Due to fasting oneself unto death one gets kingdom and obtains happiness everywhere. O Indra, an embodied one who roams about as a religious mendicant, who goes on well while in initiation, who bathes thrice a day, drinks (i.e. inhales) air (only) obtains the (fruit of a) sacrifice. He should bathe every day, be diligent and be endowed with the sandhyā (prayer), Vedas and muttering. The harmless one goes to splendour, the indestructible heaven. One who enters fire is certainly honoured in Brahmā's world. By giving up tastes he obtains beasts and sons. He who fasts, lives in heaven for a long time. He who always sleeps on the (bare) ground, obtains desired position. He who takes up the posture of the brave, who sleeps like a brave man and occupies the position of a brave man has all inexhaustible worlds reached according to his desire. O Indra, having observed a fast, taken initiation and having bathed for twelve years he goes above the position of the brave. He practises purifying righteousness and is honoured in heaven." Of the men who read (this) view of Bṛhaspati, four things grow: life, knowledge, glory and power.

Nārada said:

O king, all the sacred rules told by Bṛhaspati to Indra were told by great god (Maheśa) to me, his devotee.

CHAPTER THIRTYTHREE

A Hymn to Śani as a Remover of Trouble

Nārada said:

1. O best god, tell me how the oppression caused by Saturn goes away (i.e. is removed). A living being is freed by that which is heard from your mouth.

Mahādeva said:

2-11. O divine sage, litsen to the account. By that you will be free from bondage. This Saturn is the lord of Planets and the great lord of all. This divinity is well-known. He is a great Planet of the form of death. He is having matted hair; is having hair like diamond pins; he is fearful to the demons. O lord, in this world his account is not well-known. I have especially guarded it and have not told it to anyone. Formerly in Raghu's family there was a very famous king, Daśaratha by name. He was a sovereign emperor and a great hero. Knowing Saturn to be near Kṛttikā the astrologers informed him: Now Saturn will go piercing Rohiṇī (i.e. will pass through Rohiṇī); the piercing of the cart (-like shape of the constellation Rohiṇī) is very fierce and fearful to the gods and demons; for twelve years there will be a very great (i.e. severe) famine. Having heard these words, the king held consultation with his ministers: "What is the fearful (calamity) that has come?" Seeing the world, the citizens and the peasants distressed, people everywhere said: "The end of the world has come. Regions with cities, villages have been frightened all around." The devout king asked brāhmaṇas led by Vasiṣṭha: "O best brāhmaṇas, tell me what measure (should) be (adopted) now?"

Vasiṣṭha said:

12-18. This is the star of Prajāpati. When it is pierced, where (i.e. how) will the subjects remain? This conjunction cannot be averted (even) by Brahmā and Śakra etc.

Thinking in his mind about a rash act, he took up his divine bow along with divine weapons, quickly got into

his chariot and went to the group of stars (i.e. to the sky), numbering a lakh, and remaining over the Sun, and (covering a region) of a yojana and a quarter, and dwelling on the back of Rohiṇī. Formerly king Daśaratha, shining with great jewels and bright with a diadem and a crown looked bright in his golden, divine chariot which was decorated with gems and jewels, to which horses having the colour of swans were yoked, and which had a banner (fluttering) high. At that time he shone in the sky like another sun. Having fully (drawn) his bow up to the ear he fixed a missile that would destroy (everything). Saturn, having seen that destructive missile causing fear to gods and demons, laughed through its fear and said these words:

Saturn said:

19-20. O lord of kings, your valour is great and causes fear to the enemies. O king, gods, demons, human beings, siddhas, vidyādharas, serpents, when looked at by me, are reduced to ash. O lord of kings, I am pleased with your penance and valour. Ask for a boon—whatever you desire in your mind. I shall grant it.

Daśaratha said:

21-24. You should never pierce Rohiṇī and go (i.e. you should never pass through Rohiṇī), as long as the rivers, the oceans, the Moons, the Sun and the earth remain. I have, O Sauri, solicited (what I want). I do not desire any other boon from you.

Granting him an eternal boon, Śani said: "Let it be so". Again being pleased, he said: "O you of a good vow, ask for a boon." With a pleased mind he (the king) then solicited another boon from Saturn. (He said): "O Sun's son, you should never pierce (i.e. pass through) the cart (i.e. Rohiṇī). Never cause a famine (lasting) for twelve years'.

Saturn said:

25-27. There shall never be a famine (lasting) for twelve years. This fame of yours will spread in the three worlds.

The king, having obtained a couple of boons, and thrilling (with joy) kept his bow on the chariot, and with palms of his hands joined he meditated upon goddess Sarasvatī and Vināyaka, the chief of (Śiva's) attendants. (Then) king Daśaratha recited this hymn of praise of Saturn:

Daśaratha said:

28-38. My homage to Kṛṣṇa, Nīla (i.e. the dark one), to Śitikaṇṭhanibha (i.e. one who resembles Śiva), to Kālāgnirūpa (i.e. of the form of the destructive fire), to Kṛtānta (i.e. Death). My obeisance to Nirmāṁsadeha (i.e. having no i.e. very little flesh in his body), to Dīrghaśmasrujāta (i.e. having long moustache and beard), to Viśālanetra (i.e. having big eyes), to you having thin belly and fearful figure. My homage to Puṣkalagātra (i.e. having a large body), to Sthūlaroman (i.e. having thick hair), to Dīrgha (i.e. long), to Śuṣka (i.e. dry); salutation to you having death-like fangs. Salutation to Koṭarākṣa (i.e. having hollow-like senses), Durnirīkṣya (i.e. difficult to be looked at); Salutation to Ghora (i.e. fearful), to Raudra (i.e. fierce), to Bhīṣaṇa (i.e. terrible), to Kapālin (i.e. wearing skulls); homage to Sarvabhakṣa (i.e. one consuming everything), to you, O Valimukha (i.e. to you who have wrinkles on your face); salutation to you, O Sun's son, to you, O Bhāskari (i.e. the Sun's son), to Bhayada (i.e. causing fear); homage to you, O Adhodṛṣṭi (i.e. (looking down), to you, O Saṁvartaka (i.e. fire of destruction), to Mandagati (i.e. moving slowly), salutation to Nistriṁśa (i.e. pitiless), to you whose body is burnt by penance, to you who are always engaged in abstract meditation; constant homage to Kṣudhārta (i.e. oppressed with hunger), to Atṛpta (i.e. not content); salutation to you, the eye of knowledge, to the son of Kaśyapa's son. When you are pleased, you give a kingdom; when you are angry you take it away in a moment.

Thus praised, that very powerful king of Planets, viz. Saturn, the son of the Sun, was thrilled (with joy) and again said these words (to Daśaratha): "O you best king of a good vow, with this hymn of praise of (i.e. recited by) you, I am pleased. Ask for your desired boon. I shall grant it, O descendant of Raghu."

Daśaratha said:

39. O Sauri (i.e. Sun's son), from today you are not to cause any trouble to anyone—gods, demons, men, beasts, birds and serpents.

Śani said:

40-51. Grahas (i.e. Planets) are (so called) since they seize (a being). They are said to cause trouble. I (shall) tell you about something proper which is solicited and cannot be given. A man who will recite once or twice this hymn of praise recited by you, will be free from trouble (just) at the moment. In the fourth existence in the end, I, having gone to death, would give death to gods, demons, human beings, siddhas, vidyādharas and goblins. On the other hand, I shall never trouble him who with faith, becomes pure and calm, worships my iron image with Śamī-leaves, and who would offer as present iron mixed with beans, rice, sesamum-seeds, and would give a black cow, a bull to a brāhmaṇa, and would, especially on my day (i.e. Saturday) worship (me) with this hymn, and would, with the palms of his hands joined, recite the hymn (in my honour) after having worshipped me. I shall always protect him and (keep away) the trouble from a Planet during the Planet's influence, in the sign of Zodiac in which a person is born, in the Planet's aspect or in the middle of it. By doing this only, the world would be free from trouble. Thus, O descendant of Raghu, I have skilfully granted you a boon.

Having obtained three boons, king Daśaratha regarded himself as successful and saluted Śani. Permitted by Śani, he speedily got into his chariot and went to his place. Then the king had obtained bliss. That man who having got up in the morning on a Saturday, would recite this hymn of praise, so also the man who devoutly listens to this hymn of praise when it is being recited, is freed from a sin, and is honoured in heaven.

CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

The Account of Trispṛśā

Nārada said:

1. O lord, especially narrate to me the vow called Trispṛśā, by hearing which people are free from the bondage of their acts (just) at (that) moment.

Mahādeva said:

2-12a. Listen to the great vow called Trispṛśā of the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. It puts to an end all streams of sins. It destroys great unhappiness. It gives the desired objects to those who desire them, and gives salvation to those who have no desire. O brāhmaṇa, listen to that vow called Trispṛśā from me who am narrating it. Viṣṇu is directly worshipped in the Kali age by him who, O great sage, always narrates the (account of) Trispṛśā. All the sin would not come to an end by the repetition of the name of a deity accompanied with burnt offerings. (But) there is no doubt that it gets exhausted merely by uttering the name of Trispṛśā. O best brāhmaṇa, if Trispṛśā is not observed, salvation does not take place even by reading sacred texts, Purāṇas and other (works), (performing) sacrifices, (visits to) crores of sacred places, (observing) many multitudes of vows, worshipping deities. This date (*tithi*) sacred to Viṣṇu is noted by the god of gods for (securing) salvation. For brāhmaṇas, especially in the Kali age, the Sāṁkhya is difficult to understand; so also there is lack of control over the senses, and there is no stability of the mind. Trispṛśā gives salvation to those who are attached to sensual objects, who are without meditation and lack retentive memory. The Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu) formerly narrated it to me and Brahmā and to those who had bowed down (to him) in the Milky Ocean. I have granted salvation even to those, except the Sāṅkhyas, who, even though attached to sensual objects observe the Trispṛśā vow. Trispṛśā gives salvation to those who are attached to sensual pleasures.

12b-18. O great sage, it (i.e. the vow of Trispṛśā) has been observed even by many groups of sages. If Trispṛśā takes place in the bright half of Kārtika with the Moon or Mercury, it

destroys crores of sins. The skull of Brahmā fell on the ground just at that moment from the hand of the great lord (i.e. Śiva), possessing (the sin of) murder and observing a fast on that day. The goddess Gaṅgā was freed from the streams of crores of sins in the Kali age, due to the advice of Viṣṇu and fasting on the Trispṛśā day. O great sage, the sin of eight murders that formerly took place in the case of Bahuvīrya, was removed by means of Bhṛgu's advice and fasting on Trispṛśā. O best brāhmaṇa, Śatāyudha had killed a brāhmaṇa in a forest. He was free from (the sin of) murder of the brāhmaṇa due to fasting on Trispṛśā. Due to the advice of Jīva, (the sin due to) the killing of Namuci (committed) by Indra vanished on account of fasting on Trispṛśā, O best among the principal sages.

19-23. O best brāhmaṇa, sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc. perish by means of fasting on Trispṛśā. Then what can be said about other sins? O best brāhmaṇa, if (the vow of) Trispṛśā is not observed, then salvation is not possible at Gayā, at Kāśī, at Gomatī or near Kṛṣṇa. Eternal salvation takes place by dying at Prayāga or at Gomatī or near Kṛṣṇa, (so also) merely by bathing at Gomatī. By fasting on Trispṛśā salvation takes place even at home in the case of him who indulges in (objects of) senses and is full of sensual pleasures. Even for one who has turned away from sensual objects salvation is difficult according to the Sāṁkhya(-path). Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, observe the Trispṛśā which gives salvation.

Nārada said:

24. O best god, what kind of vow is the great vow called Trispṛśā, which gives salvation to brāhmaṇas, and which you told me about now.

Mahādeva said:

25. O brāhmaṇa, formerly Viṣṇu told Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā) about (the vow of) Trispṛśā through compassion (for her) on the bank of Prācī Sarasvatī.

Jāhnavī said:

26-27. O Viṣṇu, in this Kali age many (people) possessing the streams of crores of sins like those of the murder of a

brāhmaṇa, bathe in my water. Due to the blemishes of hundreds of sins of them, my body is made turbid. O god having Garuḍa as your banner, how will that sin of me go away?

Prācī Mādhava said:

28-35. I shall undoubtedly tell you. O daughter, do not weep. My place is the Śyāma Vaṭa; and Prācī Devī, daughter of Brahmā, flows in front of me. Looking at the chief goddess, every day bathe there. By that you will be purified. There is no doubt that I stay along with hundreds of holy places and gods there where there is Prācī, Brahmā's daughter. My place is pure and dear (to me). It destroys (the sin of) crores of murders. Since you are dearer to me than my (own) life, I, being pleased, have given it to you. O Jāhnavī, by my order thousands of crores of holy places always remain in the water of Prācī Sarasvatī. O daughter, Brahmā's daughter Prācī removes all sins on bathing once (only) in front of me (in her water). (She removes) sins due to the murder of a brāhmaṇa, drinking liquor, killing a cow or a śūdra woman, snatching the wealth of a brāhmaṇa, not honouring one's mother and father, using a vehicle, deceiving one's preceptor, or eating what is prohibited. O best river, bathe (there). You will be free from sins.

Jāhnavī said:

36. O lord of gods, I cannot come every day. O Viṣṇu, tell me now how (my) sins will perish.

Prācī Mādhava said:

37-40. O Jāhnavī, since you have risen from my feet, I shall tell you something else if you are unable to come (here) every day. You should observe (the vow of) the auspicious Trispṛśā, which is superior to (a bath in) Sarasvatī, which is superior to hundreds of crores of sacred places, which is superior to crores of sacrifices, which is superior to vows and gifts, which is superior to muttering (of hymns) and sacrifices, and which gives the four goals, which is superior to (the practices laid down in) the Sāṁkhya-Yoga (path). When it comes (i.e. falls) in a month, during either the bright or the dark half, it should be observed, O best river. When it is observed, one is free from a sin.

Jāhnavī said:

41-42. O god Viṣṇu, tell me how that Trispṛśā, about whose greatness of this kind you told me now, is. O lord, tell me if the day on which the three dates, viz. tenth, eleventh and twelfth combine would be the Trispṛśā day, or if it is different.

Kṛṣṇa said:

43-54. O goddess, that Trispṛśā which you mentioned is demonish. With care it is to be avoided as the husband who is without any livelihood (i.e. a job). It is said to be of the demons and destroys life and vigour. With care it should be avoided like a woman in her menses. My day especially in conjunction with the tenth day should be avoided like her who, having abandoned her own caste, has gone to lower castes. As ignorant people are polluted due to the contact with a woman in her menses, similarly my day in conjunction with the tenth is censurable for men. Trispṛśā, if properly fasted on, destroys (the sin) of a hundred murders. That day on which the three days viz. the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth fall, should be known as Trispṛśā and not one in conjunction with the tenth. A man, having gone through an expiation after having committed a fault, would be free. O divine river, I do not forgive the fault due to being pierced by the tenth. He who has observed the Ekādaśī-vow (on the day) mixed with the tenth has taken the *halāhala* poison or has taken poison. Thinking like this, he should not observe (a fast on) my day in conjunction with the tenth. The religious merit or the progeny of him (who does so) perishes. He would cause (the members of) his family to drop from heaven and takes (them) to (hells) like Raurava. Having purified one's body, one should observe (the vow on) my day. The day when there is increase (in its duration) should be avoided except piercing of (i.e. being mixed with another day) and combined with Śravaṇa etc. The merit of those who fast on the Ekādaśī day perishes. This is especially so in the case of the increase in its duration and when a doubt has arisen. Dvādaśī (-fast) should be observed. It is dear to him.

Jāhnavī said:

55. O lord of the world, according to your words (i.e. as you have told me) I shall observe (the vow of) Trispṛśā. By your behest I shall be free from all sins.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

56-57. Go (back) to your own place. You should never entertain fear. O goddess, O best river, sin shall never come to you. Those who, after having worshipped Mādhava, pay homage to the lord of the world, go to (i.e. obtain) the highest position.

Jāhnavī said:

58. O Brahman, tell me the manner (in which the vow is to be observed). I (shall) do it with everything (I have). I shall propitiate the lord of gods, Dāmodara, Anāmaya.

Prācī Mādhava said:

59-65a. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you the manner of (i.e. in which) Trispṛśā (should be observed), even by hearing which a man is freed from sins, O best river. According to the capacity of one's wealth, a golden image of me (weighing) a pala, half of it, or half of the latter, should be fashioned. A pot of copper should be made and should be filled with sesamum-seeds. A white pitcher containing water and with five gems, should be wrapped with garlands of flowers, and made fragrant with the incense of agaru. Then after having bathed (the image of) Viṣṇu and having smeared (it with sandal) one should put (it in the vessel). Then with a pair of garments (the image) should be seated and the worship should be done with hymns and by reciting (passages from) the Purāṇas, so also with white, seasonal flowers and tender Tulasī-leaves. One should offer an umbrella along with sandals to Viṣṇu, so also pleasing articles of food and very many fruits. One should offer a new, strong sacred thread along with an upper garment.

65b-77. One should also cause to be given a beautiful, long and strong bamboo-staff. Having duly and devoutly worshipped the feet (of the image saying) 'to Dāmodara', its knees (saying) 'to Mādhava', its private part (saying) 'to Kāmaprada', its waist

(saying) 'to Vāmanamūrti', its navel (saying) 'to Padmanābha', its belly (saying) 'to Viśvayoni', its heart (saying) 'to Jñānagamya', its throat (saying) 'to Vaikuṇṭhagāmin', its arms (saying) 'to Sahasrabāhu', its eyes (saying) 'to Yogarūpin', one should make a respectful offering. (Taking) a white coconut placed on a conch and wrapped with threads in both his hands, (he should say), "O Janārdana, if, by just being remembered you remove sins and bad dreams and evil omens seen by the mind, then, O god, protect me from the fear of hell due to fear and calamity, so also of this and the next world; accept (this) respectful offering. Salutation to you. O Dāmodara, always look favourably at me." One should then offer incense, lamp and wave a light and should revolve a lotus over the head of Viṣṇu. Having performed this rite, one should then worship his own preceptor. One should give (the preceptor) gold, garments, and a dress with a turban, so also shoes, an umbrella, a ring and a water-pot, so also a meal, a tāmbūla, seven (kinds of) corn, and a gift. Having properly worshipped the preceptor, the lord of gods, one should keep awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, with dance and music, according to the sacred precepts. At the close of the night one having duly made a respectful offering to the deity, and having performed the rites like bathing, one should eat along with brāhmaṇas.

Śiva said:

78-87. O brāhmaṇa, having heard this account of Trispṛśā which is wonderful and thrilling, one gets the religious merit due to bath in the Gaṅgā. By fasting on Trispṛśā one gets the fruit of thousands of Aśvamedha sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices. Along with all the sides like that of one's father, that of one's mother, and that of one's own one is freed, and one is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu. By fasting on Trispṛśā one gets the same religious merit as is obtained by (visiting) crores of holy places and crores of sacred places. O best brāhmaṇa, all those—brāhmaṇas, evil-minded kṣatriyas, vaiśyas or those born as śūdras, so also persons of other castes—come to (i.e. obtain) salvation after having left the earth. This is the king-hymn among the hymns as would be (the hymn of) twelve letters. Of vows (it is the chief) for him who has observed it. It was first observed by Brahmā, then was observed by royal sages. Then,

O child, what can be said about others? Trispṛśā gives salvation. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the fruit of him (i.e. which he gets) who devoutly observes this Trispṛśā vow. He who observes the Trispṛśā (vow) gets that fruit which is obtained by bathing in Gaṅgā at Vārāṇasī for thousands of the periods of Manu. A man who observes the vow of Trispṛśā obtains that fruit obtained by means of bathing in Prācī and Yamunā for crores of years.

88-95. A man who observes the Trispṛśā vow gets that fruit which is obtained by (bathing during) crores of solar eclipses at Kurukṣetra, or by (giving) hundreds of bhāras of gold. By means of just one fast thousands of crores of sins and hundreds of (sins due to) murders are quickly reduced to ash. That vow of Trispṛśā gives salvation to those who have not got it. Hundreds of (persons committing) great sins desire salvation, O brāhmaṇic sage. Kṛṣṇa himself told (this vow) in front of (i.e. to) Pārāśarya. He who, even though bound by streams of sins, shows this Vaiṣṇava (Purāṇa) after writing it to a brāhmaṇa, obtains salvation. (This vow) is secured, O wise one, by means of religious merit (collected during) hundreds of ages of Manu. Trispṛśā is difficult to be secured by men. It is not easily had in the world. The fruit of the existence of those mean men, so also their life, who, having had (i.e. having known the day of) Trispṛśā, do not observe it, is fruitless. Those who have, after having (come to know the day of) Trispṛśā, observed it (even) once have overcome (being reduced to) the state of a goblin without Śrāddha or without sons.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

The Vow of Unmīlanī

Mahādeva said:

1-9. Hereafter I shall narrate to you the excellent (vow of) the Unmīlanī (Ekādaśī), having just heard about which a man is free from the bondage of the worldly existence. A sinner is

free from his sins and is honoured in heaven. His deities and manes would obtain a good position. A student gets knowledge and would have all his desires (fulfilled) by means of the vow of that (Ekādaśī). There is no doubt about that. He is honoured in heaven. There only he secures his position, and is honoured in the world of Śiva (also). Therefore, O king, do honour the devotees of Viṣṇu. O king, those who always serve the devotees of Viṣṇu (obtain good position). Do not punish them. O king, a king takes food after they have taken it. They alone have worshipped Viṣṇu who have devoutly honoured (Viṣṇu's devotees). O king, having daily held the Śālagrāma stone on the head, every day very devoutly wear it round your neck. O king, devoutly partake of the remnant of the incense of (i.e. offered to) Viṣṇu. O king, you always inform the devotees on waving the light before the idol. Having devoutly turned water from the conch round the head of (the idol of) Viṣṇu, you bear it on your head and the remaining you give to Viṣṇu's devotees.

10-17a. O brāhmaṇa, having every day offered eatables with all ingredients (to Viṣṇu) you eat them. Food offered to Viṣṇu is eaten along with (i.e. in the company of) Viṣṇu's devotees. Every day devoutly praise him with (the hymn containing) his thousand names. Offer a light and respectful offering and sing and dance. O best king, worship him deserving worship with śyāmā shoots. O child, it is very difficult (to get an opportunity) to worship (the deity) with śyāmā shoots. The religious merit due to the worship performed with dūrvā sprouts is equal to (the one obtained by) the gift of the earth. Therefore, in this world, on this earth, there is nothing like dūrvā. He who desires absorption into Viṣṇu should worship (Viṣṇu) with dūrvā. You may not worship (him) especially with barley (grains) or sacred rice grains, O best king. Dvādaśī-vow which is observed in every fortnight destroys great sins, O great king. It always gives salvation, happiness and also (long) life.

17b-25a. This vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu is said to give salvation to Viṣṇu's devotees. It gives happiness to the householders and salvation to the ascetics. It cures all diseases etc., it is pure and it purifies the body. O king, do not observe it merely by words. Observe the tenth without penetration by another day and by keeping awake. Worship Viṣṇu every day with heaps of Tulaśī-

leaves, O best king. The gopīcandana leaf (i.e. a mark) put on the head purifies all the people, O best king. Therefore, put it made from gopīcandana (on your head). All those who have applied the mark—the killer of a brāhmaṇa, he who has stolen gold, a drunkard, he who has approached one (i.e. a woman) who should not be approached, and he who has told lies—obtain salvation. Put around your neck a garland—pre-eminent, disjoined and even—garland made of Dhātrī-fruits and of Tulasī-leaves. You worship it daily with the Śālagrāma stone having come up in Dvārakā. It gives the fruit of enjoyment and salvation.

25b-28. You read before Viṣṇu the Purāṇa called Padma, so also the account of Prahrāda, king of demons. O King, noting carefully the sacred texts, you keep away those men who observe the day (in honour) of Viṣṇu along with the proximate day. The king in that country in which the day (in honour) of Viṣṇu is observed along with its proximate day is smeared with sin and becomes a resident of hell. Abandoning the proximate (day) of four kinds and having observed a fast on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, a man, after having emancipated a crore (members of) his family, is honoured in Viṣṇu's heaven.

Gautama said:

29-32a. O king, listen to the great vow called Vaiṣṇava, hearing which all sinners obtain salvation just at that moment. I have not told anyone (else) the religious merit due to Dvādaśī. O great king, you are a devotee of Viṣṇu and a follower of Viṣṇu among men. (Therefore) listen to that very secret vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu. Formerly, due to my devotion Viṣṇu who was very much pleased, told me about (the vow called) Unmīlanī.

32b-38. O king, I shall tell you (about) it. That day on which the Ekādaśī lasts for the day and night and for a ghaṭikā on the next day, should be known as Unmīlanī, and it is especially dear to Viṣṇu. All the holy places and sacred places that are there in the three worlds can be compared only with a croreth part of the merit of Unmīlanī, so also sacrifices and austerities. There was nothing and will be nothing like Unmīlanī. (Even) Prayāga, Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, the mountains Himālaya, Meru, Gandhamādana, Nīla, Niṣadha, Vindhya, (the forest) Naimiṣa, (the rivers) Godāvarī, Kāverī, Candrabhāgā, Vedikā, Tāpī,

Payoṣṇī, Kṣiprā, Candanā, Carmaṇvatī, Sarayū, Candrabhāgā, Gaṇḍikā, Gomatī, Vipāśā, and the great river called Śoṇa, are not like Unmīlanī.

39-50. O King, what is the use of saying (these things) again and again? There is nothing superior to Unmīlanī, and none greater than Viṣṇu. The heaps of the groups of sins of those who have, on obtaining the Unmīlanī (day), worshipped Viṣṇu, fall at that moment only. O king, Viṣṇu should be carefully worshipped with the name of that month in which Unmīlanī day would fall. A silver (image of) Viṣṇu, giving it the name of the month, and of a universal form, should be fashioned according to one's capacity and with faith and devotion. A pitcher should be made (ready) containing pure water, and five jewels, and sandal, flowers and sacred grains, and adorned with a chaplet and a garland. A vessel should be made (ready) containing water and filled with wheat, with many gems and adored with many kinds of sandal, with the fragrance of jasmine flowers and adored with jasmine flowers. It should be carefully filled with rice called śveta. O royal sage, he should give (to a brāhmaṇa) a pair of garments, a sacred thread with an upper garment, a pair of shoes, and an umbrella (to be held) over his head. (So also he should give) food, a water-pot, seven kinds of corn along with sesamum-seeds, (also) silver, cotton, sweetened milk, and the image of Viṣṇu. Or a cow along with her calf and ornaments, and having golden horns, silver hoops and red back should be given. Or he should give the representation of a cow having bell metal udders and a jewelled tail, to his preceptor. He should devoutly give a furnished bed to a good (brāhmaṇa). He should offer incense, lamp, articles of food, fruits, leaves to the deity.

51-56a. The great devotees should worship Viṣṇu with Tulaśī-leaves and seasonal flowers, and with the hymn. (He should touch his) feet, with (i.e. uttering) the name of the month. (He should touch his) knees (saying 'My homage) to him of the form of Viṣṇu'. (He should touch his) private parts (saying 'My homage) to Guhyapati (i.e. the lord of secrets)'. (He should touch his) waist (saying 'My homage) to Pītavāsas' (i.e. to him who has put on a yellow garment)'. (He should touch his) navel (saying 'My homage) to Brahmamūrtibhṛt (i.e. one who holds Brahmā's form)'. (He should touch his) belly (saying 'My

homage) to Viśvayoni (i.e. the source of all)'. (He should touch his) heart (saying 'My homage) to Jñānagamya (i.e. to him who is reached through knowledge)'. (He should touch his) throat (saying 'My homage) to Vaikuṇṭhamūrti (i.e. to him of the form of Vaikuṇṭha)'. (He should touch his) forehead (saying 'My homage) to Ūrdhvaga (i.e. to him who goes up)'. (He should touch his arm (saying 'My homage) to Dakṣāntakārin (i.e. to him who destroyed Dakṣa)'. (He should touch his) head (saying, 'My homage) to Sureśa (i.e. the lord of gods)'. He should touch his) entire body (saying 'My homage) to Sarvamūrti (i.e. to the universal form)'. With (i.e. uttering) his name he should devoutly worship all (Viṣṇu's) weapons. With coconuts etc. he should offer an oblation. He should make a respectful offering after putting water over the conch, after wrapping it with a thread, and with sandal, flowers and sacred grains.

56b-62a. (He should say): 'O Devadeva (i.e. god of gods), O Mahādeva (i.e. great god), O Śrī Keśava, Janārdana, Subrahmaṇya, my salutation to you who increase the heap of religious merit. Emancipate me from the ocean of the mundane existenee full of grief, infatuation and great sin. I have not done any good deed even during hundreds of crores of existences. Yet, O great master, emancipate me from the ocean of the worldly existence. O lord of gods, by means of this vow emancipate my ancestors who have gone to evil stocks, who have been overpowered by sinful death, or those who will be or who were born from the world of the goblins. I am tired. The devotion of me who am dependent on you is faithful. I have devoutly made a respectful offering (to you). O Gadādhara, (please) accept it'. Having made a respectful offering with incense, lamp etc. due to Viṣṇu, he should please Viṣṇu with hymns of praise, by waving light in front (of his image), songs and dances.

62b-68. He should please his teacher with (gifts of) garments, (other) gifts, gifts of cows and meals. He should do (these) in such a way as the preceptor would be pleased; since the Creator has created the preceptor for emancipating the people, he should carefully honour the preceptor. He who always destroys what is harmful and shows what is beneficial and he who knows all righteous acts and worldly prosperity should be known to be the preceptor. Without practising guile about wealth he should

present it to the preceptor. O king, it becomes complete on its being presented to the preceptor. O best king, having done the daily duty he should take food in the company of brāhmaṇas. He should pass the day in (telling or listening to) stories (about Viṣṇu). He who observes the Unmīlanī-vow in this manner, lives near Viṣṇu for thousands of crores of kalpas.

CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

The Vow of Pakṣavardhinī

Nārada said:

1. O Mahādeva, of what type is (the vow) called Pakṣavardhinī, having observed which a being is free from a great sin?

Śrī Mahādeva said:

2. That would be Pakṣavardhinī, equal to myriads of horse-sacrifices, when either the new-moon day or the full-moon day is complete (i.e. lasts for the entire day and night) with sixty ghaṭikās and prolongs on the day of pratipad (i.e. the first day of a fortnight).

Nārada said :

3. O Mahādeva, now I am asking about the manner of the worship, having done which a man would obtain great fruit.

Mahādeva said:

4-12. O son of a brāhmaṇa, I shall now tell the manner of the worship. There is no doubt that a man gets the fruit when Viṣṇu is worshipped and adored, since by the performance of worship Viṣṇu is pleased. He should put a pitcher, which has no scratch, which is full of water, which is smeared with sandal, which contains five gems, which is wrapped with garlands of flowers. On the pitcher he should place a vessel containing wheat. (The image of) the deity should be made of gold and

should be named after the month. He should nicely bathe (the image of) the god of gods, Jagannātha, the lord of the world, with pañcāmṛta according to the (proper) rite. It should be besmeared with saffron, agaru and sandal. He should offer a pair of garments along with an umbrella and sandals. He should worship the (image of the) lord of deities kept in the vessel on the pitcher. (Touching) the feet (he should say, 'My homage) to Padmanābha'. (Touching) the knees (he should say, 'My homage) to Viśvamūrti'. (Touching) the thighs (he should say, 'My homage) to Jñānagamya (i.e. one who is reached through knowledge). (Touching) the waist (he should say, 'My homage) to Jñānaprada (i.e. one who gives knowledge). (Touching) the belly (he should say, 'My homage) to Viśvanātha'. (Touching) the heart (he should say, 'My homage) to Śrīdhara. (Touching) the throat (he should say, 'My homage) to Kaustubhakaṇṭha'. (Touching) the arms (he should say, 'My homage) to Kṣatrāntakārin (i.e. one who destroyed the kṣatriyas)'. (Touching) the forehead (he should say, 'My homage) to Vyomamūrdhan (i.e. one who has his head in the sky)'. (Touching) the head (he should say, 'My homage) to Sarvarūpin (i.e. of a universal form)'. He should also utter his name (and worship) Lakṣmī full of all limbs and of a divine form.

13-19. The wise one should thus duly worship and then should offer materials of worship along with a white coconut to the Disc-holder, the god of gods. The vow becomes complete by means of this offering. (He should pray to the deity as:) 'O lord of the world, lift me who am drowned in the ocean of the worldly existence. You are the lord of all the worlds. You are actually the lord of the world. Accept the respectful offering offered by me. Salutation to you, O Padmanābha'. Offerings of pleasant food, especially those having (all) the six flavours should be very devoutly offered to Viṣṇu. He should devoutly offer the nāga-leaf along with camphor to the god. He should fill the lamp with ghee or with sesamum-oil. Doing (these) properly he should (duly) worship the preceptor. He should cause to be offered (i.e. should offer him) garments, a turban and a dress. He should cause to be given (i.e. should give) the preceptor a present according to his capacity. Having given (him) food and tāmbūla

he should cause to be given (i.e. should give) him a respectful offering.

20-32. The Dvādaśi (called) Pakṣavardhinī should be observed by the poor while keeping in view the estimate of their wealth and according to their capacity. It should be carefully and properly observed. Then he should keep awake by singing, dancing, the recitation of a Purāṇa and laughter and mirth. They praise and command the keeping awake (in honour) of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu). For ten existences an every day festival would take place in their houses. Therefore, a man should observe this most virtuous Pakṣavardhinī. Having done (i.e. had) all religious merit, he undoubtedly obtains (its) fruits. Those wise men who have listened to the greatness of Pakṣavardhinī, have done meritorious deeds till the final destruction of the world. A man obtains that religious merit which he (would) obtain by practising the Pañcāgnisādhana or by visiting sacred places, by keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. The Pakṣavardhinī is virtuous, pure, and destroys sins. When a fast is observed on the day (of Pakṣavardhinī) it destroys (the sin due to) crores of brāhmaṇa-murders. It was, O sage, formerly observed by Vasiṣṭha, so also by Bhāradvāja; this one, dear to Viṣṇu, was observed by Dhruva and Ambarīṣa. It is virtuous like Kāśī. It is like Dvārakā. When a devotee fasts on this day, it gives him his desired object. It is blessed, most blessed. It destroys (the sin of) a myriad of murders. It should be especially observed by those who are devoted to knowledge. O god, lord of all should be served by all who are intent upon (observing) the vow. As the moon waxes, especially in the bright half, the Pakṣavardhinī waxes for the devotee (of Viṣṇu). As darkness goes away at sunrise, the sin of a man on observing (the vow of) Pakṣavardhinī perishes.

CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

Keeping Awake on Ekādaśī and Dvādaśī

Mahādeva said:

1. O Nārada, listen to the importance of keeping awake, having listened to which (even) a great sinner undoubtedly obtains salvation.

Nārada said:

2-6. Viṣṇu, the lord of all, is always a purifier. O Śiva, I have heard from your mouth the importance of a fast (in honour) of him. Still I desire to hear about the importance of keeping awake. Of what kind is the importance of keeping awake? Of what kind is the nocturnal devotion? O lord of the universe, O master, tell (me) about the worship (offered) during the various watches. You are always adored in the worlds. You are god Janārdana (i.e. Viṣṇu). You are the god, the lord of the universe, since you are devoted to Viṣṇu. You, the lord of Umā, are the greatest among all devotees. In this world you are known by means of your devotion. Therefore, O lord of the universe, tell (me) in which manner people will be emancipated, so also (tell me about) the importance of keeping awake.

Mahādeva said:

7-18. On the Ekādaśi day a man, after having devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu at night, should keep awake along with Viṣṇu's devotees in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu. The man who always sings, plays upon musical instruments, dances, listens to the Purāṇas, offers incense, waves lights (before the image), offers eatables, flowers, sandal and unguents, fruits, respectful offering, presents with devotion, and controls his senses, and O best brāhmaṇa, speaks truthful and proper words followed by action, and who always keeps awake gladly, is free from all sins and becomes dear to Viṣṇu. When keeping awake at night has become (necessary), those devotees of Viṣṇu who sleep, have lost (the fruit of) the fast and (that of) the vow called Viṣṇu(vrata).Those men, O wise one, who keep awake on the (night of the Viṣṇu-vrata) called Viṣṇu-jāgara through devotion for Viṣṇu and do

not at all sleep, and repeat mentally (i.e. to themselves) Viṣṇu's name, should be known to be most blessed. Especially on this night (the repetition of Viṣṇu's name gives the fruit of) the gift of a cow every moment; (the fruit) is fourfold (if the name is repeated) for a ghaṭikā; it is crorefold (if the name is repeated) for a watch (i.e. three hours); it is countless (if the name is repeated) for four watches. By keeping awake (just) for a twinkling of the eye (i.e. a moment), and that too especially in front of Viṣṇu, the fruit (obtained) is crorefold; it is countless. The fruit of (i.e. obtained by) the best man who dances in front of Viṣṇu, is never lost from his birth to his death. He should, with his mind free from dejection, wave lights before Viṣṇu, with wonder, energy, without sinful talk etc., accompanied by going round (the deity keeping it to his right) and preceded by a salutation.

19-27a. That man, who devoutly keeps awake on Ekādaśī, which is twentysixfold fruitful, is not reborn on the earth. He who thus without egotism born of wealth devoutly keeps awake on Viṣṇu's day, is merged into the supreme soul. That wealthy man who through egotism born of wealth keeps awake, (is) a rogue and a wicked man (and) has indeed lost his soul. He, when the (occasion for) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu has come, ridicules it, is born as an insect in feces (and remains as such) for sixty thousand years. That brāhmaṇa knowing the Vedas who, especially through dancing, indulges in ridicule is called a cāṇḍāla. He who for a moment or half a moment(?) keeps awake, obtains the best position (as far as) righteousness, material welfare and sensual pleasures (are concerned). He who is always devoted to the Vedic and scriptural injunctions and who every day performs sacrifices, goes down (to hell if) he ridicules when keeping awake at night has come (to be practised). He who worshipping me, is given to ridiculing Viṣṇu goes to hell with twentyone (members of) his family. Viṣṇu is Śiva and Śiva is Viṣṇu. They have the same form, (but) remain (separately) in two forms.

27b-30. Therefore, a man should not in any way ridicule (the vow). Bitten by the serpent of Kali the destroyers of honey sleep by day(?); deluded by illusion they do not at all keep awake. Those to whom Ekādaśī has come (and is passed by them) without keeping themselves awake in the Kali age have perished,

since life is uncertain. There is no doubt about this. He raised the couple of eyes after having given the position of Viṣṇu (*obscure*!). Sinners do not see the awakening done (in honour) of Viṣṇu. In the absence of a public reader of a Purāṇa, he should get done singing and dancing. If there is a public reader, (then) O divine sage, he should first read the Purāṇa.

31-37a. O child, on doing the awakening (in honour) of Viṣṇu, the religious merit (that is obtained) is a crorefold more than that of a horse-sacrifice or a Vājapeya sacrifice. A man having kept awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, emancipates the families on the side of father, on the side of mother and on the wife's side. O brāhmaṇa, on keeping awake in honour of Viṣṇu he emancipates (the members of) his family. On a day of fast that is 'pierced' (i.e. that is mixed with another day) the keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, worshipping him, giving gifts—all this is useless as (a good) turn done to the ungrateful. When keeping awake is begun on such a 'pierced' day—the day of the fast—Viṣṇu leaves that place and goes after giving a curse. Among those who keep awake on a day that is not 'pierced' (i.e. not mixed with another day), Viṣṇu being pleased remains in their midst and dances. For as many days as he keeps awake in front of Viṣṇu for so many yugas he is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

37b-41. For as many days as he remains without keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, for those many thousands of years he does not return from (i.e. lives in) Raurava hell. He who on the Ekādaśī day sleeps without keeping awake or who remains like a dumb man and does not practise singing or does not read (the Purāṇa text), has dumbness for seven existences for want of keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, one should know that he who, the foolish one, does not dance in front of Viṣṇu by keeping awake, has lameness for seven existences. But he who sings, dances and keeps awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, gets Brahmā's position, my position and truly that of Viṣṇu (also).

42-50. That devotee of Viṣṇu who (himself) being engaged in keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, enlightens people, would live along with his manes and for a long time in Vaikuṇṭha. The man who gives (others) the idea about keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, would live for sixty thousand years in Śveta Dvīpa. O

brāhmaṇa, all that sin which men commit during crores of existences, perishes during the night on keeping awake (in honour) of Śrīkṛṣṇa. For those who keep awake in front of a Śālagrāma stone the fruit for every watch is said to be that which is had (by keeping awake on) a crore of lunar months. Those who do not keep awake when the day (of the vow) of Viṣṇu has come, their observance of the vow is in vain due to the censure of the devotees. Even by (the performance of) myriads of sacrifices pleasures of senses, wealth, sons, fame, eternal worlds are not obtained without keeping awake on the Dvādaśī (day). He who does not have a mind to keep awake on the Dvādaśī day, has no right to worship Viṣṇu. The number of footsteps of him who goes to Viṣṇu's temple for keeping awake has the merit of an equal number of horse-sacrifices. For as many years a man keeping awake lives in heaven as the number of dust (particles) fallen there on the road from the feet (of those who) walk (along it).

51-58. Therefore, from one's house one should go to Viṣṇu's temple for keeping awake. In the Kali (age) to destroy sins this Dvādaśī is (the best) among Dvādaśīs. Keeping awake is said to be of nine types: Full of censure of others, with the mind void of tranquillity, bereft of sacred precepts, without music, so also without light (to be waved before the image of the deity), without the necessary articles (obtainable) according to one's capacity, indifferent, full of censure, and especially full of quarrels. That keeping awake which is according to the scriptural injunctions, is full of dance and music with musical instruments, with the beating of time in music, with light and honey, is accompanied by proper utterances produced with devotion, is pleasing and causing delight, and amuses the enchanted people—(such) keeping awake having these twelve merits and dear to Viṣṇu should be done with efforts in the bright and the dark halves (of the month). What is the use of observing many vows and living at a sacred place to him who does not keep awake when the twelfth day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu has come? He who even while travelling and though full of perspiration, does not give up keeping awake on the twelfth day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is dear to me, O brāhmaṇa.

59-62a. That devotee of me who deluded by sin does not keep awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, has his worship in vain, (as) he would not (i.e. does not) worship him who is venerable to me. He who eats on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is not a devotee of Śiva, is not a worshipper of the Sun, is not a devotee of Śakti, nor the votary of (Śiva's) attendant. He should be known to be inferior to a beast. He, a wicked and sinful person, who eats on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, has, after having resorted to the strength of my devotion, acted disagreeably.

62b-64. His body is wrapped inside and outside with crores of sins. Those who keep awake on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, are freed. He who having kept awake, has observed the vow of Dvādaśī that is not mixed (with another day), has given an elbow to (i.e. has avoided) the messengers of Yama. O best sage, they, expecting (to go to) heaven are undoubtedly freed. (On the contrary) those who observe the vow of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu on a day mixed (with another day) have longed for happiness in hell.

65-69. He (i.e. such a man) has killed his manes, and has murdered gods; has given (his kingdom to demons by observing the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu which is mixed (with another day). For a man who keeps awake with such dispositions on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, who clapping his hands and with a delighted mind dances, who sings songs with his mouth, manifests (many kinds of) joy, who remaining awake on the night stands before Viṣṇu, reads Kṛṣṇa's accounts, amuses the groups of Viṣṇu's devotees, who with his hair standing on end produces musical sounds from his mouth, presents many kinds of food, and causes (others) to talk freely, the fruit at every moment is said to be the same as got by visiting crores of holy places.

70-74. He who without a dejected mind presents incense and waves lights in front (of the image) of Viṣṇu on the night of keeping awake (i.e. on which he keeps awake) would be the lord of the seven islands (i.e. of the earth). Due to keeping awake on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, all those sins like (the ones due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, perish piece by piece. On one hand are all the sacrifices concluded with (the offering of) excellent presents, and on the other there is keeping awake (in honour) of the god of gods. Which is dear to Viṣṇu? Kāśī,

Puṣkara, Prayāga, Naimiṣa, Gayā, the great holy place of Śālagrāma, the Arbuda forest, Pauṣkara (i.e. the holy Puṣkara), Mathurā, and all (other) sacred places, so also sacrifices and all the four Vedas go to (i.e. attend) the keeping awake (in honour of) Viṣṇu.

75-78. O best brāhmaṇa, all rivers (like) Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, Tāpī, Yamunā, Śatadrukā, Candrabhāgā, Vitastā, so also ponds, deep lakes, all seas go there on the Ekādaśī (day for) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. These men desirable to gods, being delighted by the musical instrument like the lute, dance and sing (at the time of) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. In this way having kept awake, having worshipped great Viṣṇu, he should, along with Viṣṇu's devotees, break his fast on the Dvādaśī (day).

Mahādeva said:

79-84. O brāhmaṇa, listen. I shall explain (to you) the excellent importance of Dvādaśī. Dvādaśī should always be known to give sons and to give salvation. Having bathed in the morning, having worshipped Viṣṇu, one should observe a fast. 'O Viṣṇu, by means of this vow of me who am blind due to the darkness of ignorance, be pleased, favour me and give me the sight of knowledge'. Then, after this, he should break fast as is possible for him. After this he should duly get done (proper rites) as desired. O brāhmaṇa, when the Dvādaśī (lasts) shorter for breaking the fast, then he who desires salvation, should break the fast at night. Then there would be no blemish due to (breaking the fast at) night and there would be nothing that is prohibited. He should get the duty done (i.e. should do it) as by day in the first and the next watches of the night, since it is said that a man should not bathe at night and should not eat at midnight.

85-92. When on the day of breaking the fast Dvādaśī lasts for a short time, then he should do both the morning and the mid-day rites in the morning. I am not able to describe the religious merit especially of that man who has always observed Dvādaśī on the earth. Great men having accomplised all desired objects, would obtain (salvation). Those devotees like Ambarīṣa and others who are well-known in the world, have gone to Viṣṇu's abode after having observed (the vow of) Dvādaśī.

What I told is the truth, the truth again, viz. that there is no god like Viṣṇu, and no day like Dvādaśī. Whatever is given on this day, whatever is eaten, and the worship etc. (offered on this day) —all that is complete when Viṣṇu is worshipped. What is the use of talking much? Viṣṇu dear to his devotees, gives them all their desired objects till the final destruction of the world. All that is given on the Dvādaśī would become fruitful. Whatever is given on the Kurukṣetra is never fruitless. In the same way, O best sage, whatever is given on Dvādaśī would become like that.

CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

The Origin of Ekādaśī and the Killing of Demon Mura

Mahādeva said:

1. O son, on one occasion I had gone into the proximity of (i.e. to) Viṣṇu. There I first asked (him) about the importance of Dvādaśī, having heard which all sages having enjoyed pleasures went to heaven.

Nārada said:

2. O Mahādeva, of what kind would be the great (vow of the) Mahādvādaśī? O lord, O ruler of all, what kind of fruit (would one get) by observing it.

Śiva said:

3-17a. O brāhmaṇa, this Ekādaśī gives the fruit (in the form) of great religious merit. It should be observed by the best sages when it is in conjunction with (certain) constellations. Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī and Pāpanāśinī—all these destroy sins. They should be observed by those who desire (certain) fruits. When, in the bright half (of the month), the star Punarvasu (i.e. the seventh lunar mansion) appears on the Ekādaśī day, that is called Jayā, and it is the best of days. Having observed a fast on that day a man is freed from a sin. There is no doubt about this. When, in the bright half (of the month), the star Śravaṇa

(i.e. the twentysecond lunar mansion) appears on the Dvādaśī day, that is called Vijayā and it is the best of days. Gift given on that day becomes thousandfold (in religious merit); so also food given to brāhmaṇas (becomes like that). In the same way a sacrifice (performed) or a fast (observed on that day) gives more than a thousandfold fruit. When on the Dvādaśī in the bright half Rohiṇī (i.e. the fourth lunar mansion) appears, that is called Jayantī. That day removes also sins. Viṣṇu worshipped on that day certainly washes sins, small or great, committed during (previous) seven existences. When on the Dvādaśī in the bright half Puṣya (i.e. the eighth lunar mansion) appears, then that will be the very meritorious Pāpanāśinī. (The religious merit of him) who every day gives a prastha of sesamum-seeds (to a brāhmaṇa) for the (whole) year, and (the religious merit of him) who observes a fast on that day (i.e. on the Pāpanāśinī) are said to be equal. Viṣṇu, the lord of all, the lord of the world, being pleased, appears actually (i.e. in person) only, and endless fruit is said (to be obtained by him who observes a fast) on that (day). Viṣṇu who was won over and worshipped on that (day) by Sagara, Kakutstha and Nahuṣa, gave (them) everything on the earth. There is no doubt that he (who observes a fast on that day) is freed from the sin due to speech, mental sin or especially bodily sin committed during the seven (previous) existences. A man having fasted on that (Pāpanāśinī) alone, which is joined with the star Puṣya, obtains the fruit of (having fasted on) a thousand Ekādaśīs. Whatever like a bath, (giving a) gift, muttering (of hymns), a sacrifice, self-study, worship of a deity, is done on that day is said to give an inexhaustible fruit.

17b-18. Therefore, those who desire the fruit (like salvation) should observe (a fast on) this (day) carefully. When Yudhiṣṭhira had the ablution after the fifth horse-sacrifice, he, the religious-minded one, asked Kṛṣṇa, the scion of the Yadu family:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

19. O lord, O Janārdana, tell me all that, viz. what religious merit or what fruit (is obtained) by observing a fast on eating only at night or eating once (a day).

The lord said:

20-27a. In the cold season, when the auspicious month of Mārgaśīrṣa has come, a man should fast on that Dvādaśī which (comes) in the dark half, O son of Pṛthā (i.e. O son of Kuntī, O Yudhiṣṭhira). Knowing what 'nakta' is, a man, with a pure heart and of a firm vow, eating (only) once on the tenth, and being controlled, (should eat) during the eighth part of the day when the Sun is feeble (i.e. is setting). That should be known as 'nakta'. 'Nakta' is not eating only at night. Nakta is enjoined for a householder before the stars appear (in the sky). The nakta for an ascetic is eating only in the eighth part of the day. Eating at night is prohibited for him. Then, O Yudhiṣṭhira, he who has taken the vow, should make the religious observance in the morning, so also in the mid-day, and being pure, should bathe. Bathing in a temporary well is the lowest; bathing in a well is of a middling quality. Bathing in a tank is excellent. Bathing in a river is still better. O Yudhiṣṭhira, the sin and the religious merit are equal when a bath is taken in the water where living beings are troubled. Bathing at home is excellent, and the water should purify (him). Therefore, O best (or eldest) of the Pāṇḍavas, a man should bathe in his house.

27b-32. (At that time he should pray:) 'O you earth, that are stepped over by horses, gone over by chariots and by Viṣṇu, remove the sin that has been collected by me in (my) former (existence)'. He should give up anger and greed. He should think of one thing only, and be of a firm vow. He should not talk to a Śūdra, so also to heretics, so also to those given to lying, so also to those who censure brāhmaṇas, and to others of bad behaviour, to those who take away others' wealth, and to those who are adulters. Having worshipped Viṣṇu, he should make articles of food offered; and with a devoted mind he should offer lights in the house. O Pārtha, on that day he should avoid sleep and sexual union. He should pass the entire day in recreation by means of sacred texts.

33-39. O best king, he, being full of devotion, should keep awake during the night, should give presents to brāhmaṇas, and should, after having saluted them, apologise to them. He should get observed (i.e. observe) the Ekādaśī (vow) during the bright

half as during the dark half (of the month). He should not differentiate between (the two Ekādaśīs). Listen to the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who does like this. A man, after bathing at Śaṁkhoddhāra and after seeing (the image of) god Viṣṇu, does not deserve (i.e. obtain) even the sixteenth part (of the merit) of fasting on an Ekādaśī day. O best king, a man who gives four lakhs (of coins) on the days of the passage of the Sun from one Zodiacal sign to another, does not deserve (i.e. obtain) even the sixteenth part (of the merit) of fasting on an Ekādaśī day. Indeed he who observes a fast on an Ekādaśī day, gets the same fruit as the religious merit that is due to (the bath) during the lunar eclipse or the solar eclipse at the holy place Prabhāsa. Rebirth is not had by him after he has drunk water at Kedāra. In the same way, O Yudhiṣṭhira, it removes staying in a womb.

40-48. The religious merit that he who observes a fast on an Ekādaśī day gets, is a hundredfold more than the fruit that he would get from a horse-sacrifice on the earth. The religious merit of him who fasts on an Ekādaśī day is a hundred times more that the religious merit he would obtain by giving a thousand cows to (a brāhmaṇa) who has mastered the Vedas. Those who fast on the Ekādaśī day are equal to those in whose bodies live the three deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Those who are devotees (of Viṣṇu) and who worship Viṣṇu, are those who perform virtuous deeds. So also the religious merit of (i.e. due to) the vow of Ekādaśī cannot be counted. This would be its religious merit which is difficult to be obtained even by gods. Half the religious merit of this is obtained even through eating at night only. Men would have half the religious merit of this through eating once (a day). Sacred places, gifts, restraints roar till that time till a living being (i.e. a human being) would not fast on a day dear to Viṣṇu. Therefore, O best Pāṇḍava, observe this vow. O Pāṇḍava, I do not know the quantity of religious merit (about) which you are asking me. O Pāṇḍava, I have narrated to you the excellent vow, which should be kept secret. Even the performance of a thousand sacrifices is not equal to the Ekādaśī (vow).

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

49. O god, how has this auspicious Ekādaśī day come up? How is it pure in the universe and how is it dear to deities?

The lord said:

50-54. O Pārtha, formerly in the Kṛta-age there was a demon by name Mura. He was very wonderful, very fierce and caused fear to all gods. O king, even Indra, and so also other gods were vanquished by that death(-like), great, wicked demon. Driven out of the heaven they roamed on the earth. With uncertainty and full of fear, all of them went to the great god, and Indra told everything to the great lord (i.e. Śiva). (He said:) "O great god, the gods fallen from the heaven are roaming on the earth and they who are staying among the mortals, do not shine (at all). O god, tell me the remedy. What course do (i.e. should) the gods follow?"

Mahādeva said:

55-58. O You best among gods, O lord of gods, go there where he, the eagle-bannered (god), the lord of the world, the protector, and the best resort dwells. O best among gods, he will protect you.

O Yudhiṣṭhira, on having heard the words of the lord, the very intelligent king of the gods went there along with the gods. Seeing the god, the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu) sleeping in the water, Indra joined the palms of his hands, uttered (this hymn of praise):

Indra said:

59-65. Salutation to you, O lord of the gods, O you who are saluted by gods and demons, O you enemy of the demons, O you lotus-eyed one, O Madhusūdana, protect us. O lord of the world, all gods frightened by the demon (Mura) have come to seek your refuge. O you to whom your devotees are dear, protect me. O lord of gods, protect us; O Janārdana, protect us, protect us. O you lotus-eyed one, O you destroyer of the demons, protect us. We all have approached you. You alone are our refuge, O lord. O lord, help the gods who have sought your shelter. O god, you are the master; you are the intellect; you are the agent; you are the cause. You are the mother of all the people. You are the father of the world. O holy one, O

lord of gods, O you who love those who seek your shelter; the deities that are frightened, have sought your refuge. O lord, all the deities have been vanquished. All of them have been expelled from heaven by the very fierce and very vigorous demon named Mura.

Hearing the words of Indra, Viṣṇu said (these words):

The lord said:

66. O Indra, of what kind is the demon? Of what form is he? Of what kind is his might? Where is the place of that wicked one? What is his strength? What is his valour? What is precious about him? O you very intelligent one, tell me (that).

Indra said:

67-75. O lord of gods, formerly there was a very fierce, great demon named Tālajaṅgha (who was) born in the family of Brahmā. His son, the demon Mura, was well-known. He was very mighty, very powerful and fearful to gods. (There was) a city by name Candrāvatī. He lived in that place. He vanquished all gods, and expelled them from heaven. He installed another Indra (as the chief of gods), so also (another) Vāyu and (another) Agni. He fashioned other (i.e. new) Moon and Sun, so also Vāyu and Varuṇa. He took possession of everything. O Janārdana, (this is) the truth, (the only) truth. He made the world of gods bereft of all holy places.

Hearing these words of him (i.e. of Indra), the angry Viṣṇu (said): "I shall kill the wicked demon, fearful to the gods." Then the god, along with (other) gods went to the city of Candrāvatī. The gods saw the demon roaring repeatedly. He vanquished all gods. They went in the ten directions. Seeing Viṣṇu the demon said: "Wait, wait." The lord, with his eyes red due to anger, said to him:

The lord said:

76-84. O demon, O you of a bad conduct, see (the power of) my arm.

Then all the wicked demons that were before him were struck

by Viṣṇu with divine arrows. They were overcome with fear. O Pāṇḍava, Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu) discharged his disc against the forces of the demon. Hundreds (of demons) were cut off by it, and many died. Only one demon fought there repeatedly. He made all the gods flee and vanquished Viṣṇu. Then (of him who was) vanquished by the demon, a close fight with the demon took place. He fought that close fight for a thousand divine years. Viṣṇu became thoughtful. All gods had fled. Viṣṇu was vanquished. He went to Badarikāśrama. There was a cave named Siṁhavatī. Viṣṇu slept there (i.e. in it). O Pāṇḍava, it was twelve yojanas (in length) and had one door (only). He entered it and slept (there). The demon was bent on killing him.[1] He was tired due to that great battle, (and had slept there) through his divine power. The demon pursued him.[2] He then entered that cave. Seeing him (i.e. seeing Viṣṇu) asleep there, the demon was delighted. Thinking Viṣṇu to have been vanquished like this and to have been entered (i.e. overpowered) by fear, (he thought:) 'I shall undoubtedly kill him, the cause of fear to the demons.'

85-90. O Yudhiṣṭhira, then a maiden came out of Viṣṇu's body. She was beautiful, very auspicious, and had divine missiles and weapons. She, of a great might and valour, came up from a portion of his lustre. O Dhanañjaya, she was seen by that lord of demons, Mura by name. He directed a fight there. The maiden also had asked for it. The maiden skilled in all (kinds of) battle, fought there. The great demon by name Mura was reduced to ash due to (her) huṁkāra sound. When the demon was killed, the god (Viṣṇu) woke up. Seeing the demon fallen (dead) he was amazed: 'who has killed this fierce and very cruel enemy of me? (That person) has done a very ferocious deed through compassion for me.'

The maiden said:

91-93a. He having conquered gods, gandharvas, yakṣas and goblins, so also Indra and others, expelled them from heaven. I saw Viṣṇu asleep, and Mura had pursued him. (I thought:) 'He will destroy the three worlds when Viṣṇu is asleep.'

1. and 2. *mām* appears to be a wrong word here. It should have been *tam*.

Hearing those words of her, Viṣṇu, spoke (these) words: "How is it that you vanquished him too who had defeated me?"

Ekādaśī said:

93b. O lord, due to your favour I killed the great demon.

The lord said:

94. In the three worlds sages and deities are delighted. O auspicious one, tell me what you like in your mind (i.e. what your mind likes). There is no doubt that I shall give it even if it is very difficult to be obtained by gods.

Ekādaśī said:

95-96. If O god, you are pleased, and if you have told the truth, O Janārdana, I desire one boon in (i.e. from) my heart, O lord of the world. O lord of gods, I shall ask for what is desired by me. O lord, O master of the world, if (your offer is) true, then give me three utterances (i.e. repeat your offer thrice).

The lord said:

97. O you of a good vow, I have certainly spoken the truth, I have made three utterances (i.e. I have repeated my promise three times). Now there would be no absence of promise (i.e. the promise will not be false).

Ekādaśī said:

98-101. O lord of gods, do for me what is proper in the three worlds, in the four ages and everywhere in the three worlds. Through your favour I shall be the chief of all sacred places, the destroyer of all difficulties, and one who brings about all (kinds of) well-being. If, O lord, you are pleased with me, then, may they who through devotion (for me) and devotion for you, fast on my day, have all (kinds) of well-being. O Viṣṇu, give wealth, righteousness and salvation to him who observes a fast or a *nakta* or who eats once a day (on the day sacred to me).

Viṣṇu said:

102-110. O auspicious one, all that you say will take place. O good one, you will grant all desires. (This will) not be other-

wise. My devotees who in the world will observe the Ekādaśī vow and worship me in Kārtika will undoubtedly obtain salvation.

O lord, the Ekādaśī is famous in the four ages and the three worlds. I look upon you as a power. The third, the eighth, the ninth, the fourteenth, and especially this eleventh are dear to Viṣṇu. (A man who observes the Ekādaśī vow gets) religious merit more than (obtained) from all the sacred places. This is true, undoubtedly true. He gave this vow to her repeating it thrice. There was no doubt about it. The Ekādaśī of a great vow became glad and strong. 'You will kill his (i.e. the observer's) enemy. You will give him the highest position. You, giving (all kinds of) welfare, will remove all difficulties. O Yudhiṣṭhira, the Ekādaśī of both the fortnights is equal (in merit) and is auspicious. A man should not differentiate between the bright and the dark (Ekādaśī of the bright half and that of the dark half). He should devoutly listen to (pious accounts) by day or at night. For both the fortnights the same day (i.e. Ekādaśī) would be the full (day). At the sunrise the Ekādaśī day is little (i.e. is in a small part). At the end of the vow is the Trayodaśī (i.e. the thirteenth day).

111-114a. In between (the two) there is the full Dvādaśī (i.e. the twelfth day). Thus that (Ekādaśī-vow) which touches (these) three (days) is dear to Viṣṇu. If a man fasts on one (Ekādaśi he would get the) fruit of (having observed) a thousand Ekādaśīs. This would be thousandfold if the fast is broken on Dvādaśī. Aṣṭamī, Ekādaśī, Ṣaṣṭhī, Tṛtīyā and Caturdaśī, mixed with the previous day, should not be observed (as fast days). A man should observe (a fast on any one of these) when mixed with the next day. If the Ekādaśī lasts for a day and night and would continue for a ghaṭikā in the (next) morning, that day should be avoided. That Ekādaśī, along with Dvādaśī, should be fasted on.

114b-118. Thus, I have told you about the Ekādaśī falling in both the fortnights. There is no doubt that a man should observe a fast on the Ekādaśī day. They (i.e. who observe this fast) go to the place of Viṣṇu where the eagle-bannered (god Viṣṇu) dwells. Those men who are absorbed in devotion for Viṣṇu are blessed in the world. That man who would at all

times recite the importance of the Ekādaśī(-vow), obtains the religious merit which is the fruit (of the gift) of a thousand cows. There is no doubt that those who devoutly listen to it by day or at night are freed from the sins of killing a brāhmaṇa etc. O best king, the (exposition of) the significance of the Gītā is not equal to devotion to Viṣṇu. There is no other vow like that of the Ekādaśī, that destroys sins.

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

The Importance of the Mokṣadā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-3. I salute Viṣṇu who is actually the lord, who gives happiness to the three worlds, who is the lord of the universe, the author of everything, the ancient Puruṣottama. O lord of gods, I ask (because) I have a great doubt (and also) for the well-being of the world and for the destruction of sins. O master, tell me in detail and properly, about the manner in which that Ekādaśī[1] which would fall in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, is observed and which deity is worshipped (on that day).

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

4-17. O king, you have asked well. Your spotless fame is excellent. O lord of kings, I shall tell you about the excellent day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. The Dvādaśī that has come up in the dark half of Mārgaśīrṣa is dear to me. (This one) called Mārgaśīrṣa-utpatti has sprung up from my body. O best among

1. From this chapter onwards the Ekādaśīs falling in each of the two fortnights of a month are described. The months are said to end with the full-moon day.

To the north of the Narmadā, a month is generally considered to end with the full-moon day, while in other parts of the country, the month is supposed to end with the new-moon day. The bright half is the same. That half of the month which is the dark half of Caitra according to the practice followed to the north of Narmadā, is the dark half of the Vaiśākha month in other parts of the country.

the Bharatas, it has sprung up for killing the gods (?) and demons. O best king, I have told about it to you. The day previous (to this) in the dark half of the (month of) Mārgaśīrṣa is called Utpatti Ekādeśī in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. Hereafter I shall describe the one that falls in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, by hearing about which a man would obtain the fruit of the Vājapeya (sacrifice). It is great, is called by the name Mokṣadā and removes all sins. A man should carefully worship Dāmodara (i.e. Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, on this day), O king. (He should worship Viṣṇu) carefully with the Tulasī-sprouts, according to the manner (told) before. This Ekādaśī (having on that day a portion of) Daśamī also, is called Mokṣā (i.e. Mokṣadā) Ekādaśī. It destroys great sins. At night he should keep awake with dances, songs and my eulogies. O king, listen. I shall tell you a divine, ancient story, by merely hearing which all sins would perish. There is no doubt that due to the religious merit that it gives, the (dead) forefathers (of a man) that have, due to (their) sins, gone to (i.e. born in) a mean stock, go to (i.e. obtain) salvation. In the city (called) Campaka which was adorned with Viṣṇu's devotees, there (lived) a king Vaikhānasa by name. He would (i.e. he did) look after his subjects like his own sons. (In the city) lived many brāhmaṇas who had mastered the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. The subjects of that king Vaikhānasa were prosperous. O king, he was ruling over his kingdom like this. He (once) saw at night in a dream his own forefathers gone to a mean stock. He, seeing all of them like this, with his mind full of amazement, told the account that took place in the dream to brāhmaṇas.

The king said:

18-23. O brāhmaṇas, I saw my forefathers gone to hell, and saying to me: "O you born of our bodies, emancipate us from this ocean of hell." I saw them speaking like this and weeping repeatedly, O best brāhmaṇas. Due to this I am unhappy. This great kingdom does not give me pleasure. O brāhmaṇas, I am not pleased with all the horses and the elephants. O best brāhmaṇas, my wife and sons do not please me. What do (i.e. should) I do? O best brāhmaṇas, tell me about that vow, that practice of penance, by means of which my

ancestors will go to (i.e. obtain) salvation. What is the fruit (i.e. use) of that son who is living richly, who is mighty and magnanimous, when his father lives in a fearful hell?'

The brāhmaṇas said:

24-29. The great hermitage of the sage Parvata who knows the past and the future, is nearby. O best king, go to that hermitage.

Then hearing (these) words of them, the great king Vaikhānasa quickly went to the hermitage of Parvata. The king was surrounded by brāhmaṇas and accompanied by (other) kings. The best king reached his (i.e. Parvata's) extensive hermitage. Having seen the best sage like another Brahmā, surrounded by sages well-versed in the study of Ṛgveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda, king Vaikhānasa saluted the sage (by prostrating before him) in the manner of a staff and touched his feet. The sage asked him about the welfare of the seven constituent[1] parts of the kingdom, so also about the absence of trouble in the kingdom and the king's happiness.

The king said:

30-38. O master, by your favour there is well-being in the seven constituent parts of my kingdom. How can those who are devoted to Viṣṇu and brāhmaṇas, have (any) difficulty? I saw in a dream my ancestors living in hell. O master, I have come to you to clear the doubt, O best brāhmaṇa, as to which religious merit will give them salvation. O best sage, some remedy should be adopted in this case.

Having heard these words from him, Parvata, the best sage, the ascetic, resembling Brahmā, fixed his eyes in meditation. Remaining in meditation for a short time, he replied to the king: "O lord of kings, I have understood the former acts of your ancestors. In his previous existence, your father, a kṣatriya, was proud of his kingdom. Prompted by his royal duty and

1. Saptāṅgāni: The seven constituents of a kingdom are: the king, the minister, the allies, the treasury, the territory, the fortress, and the army.

seeking to gain his object, he, leaving his wife behind in the time favourable for conception, went to a village. Your father did not give her (what should be given to his wife) during the period favourable for conception (i.e. did not copulate with her). As a result of that sin, O best king, your father, along with your ancestors, fell into a very terrible hell." After that king Vaikhānasa again said to the sage: "O sage, by to the power of which vow would they have salvation?"

The sage said:

39-47. In the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa there is the Mokṣā (or *Mokṣadā Ekādaśī*). All should observe this vow, and (its) religious merit should be given to a (dead) father (i.e. ancestor). By the efficacy of that religious merit they will have salvation. O glorious one, this is true since it is the statement of Brahmā.

Having heard the words of the sage he again came back to his house. And then the month of Mārgaśīrṣa also came. King Vaikhānasa, having observed the vow with effort, gave, along with all, its religious merit to his father. When the religious merit was given, just in a moment, shower of flowers occurred from the sky; and Vaikhānasa's father, along with his ancestors, entered (i.e. obtained) salvation. And from the sky he (i.e. the father) spoke (these) auspicious words: "O son, may it be well with you, may it be well with you." Speaking thus he went to heaven. O king, the sins of him who observes the auspicious (vow of) the Mokṣā (i.e. Mokṣadā) Ekādaśī, perish, and after death he would obtain salvation. There cannot be any Ekādaśī superior to this one, that would give (one) salvation. O king, I do not know the measure of religious merit (it gives). O king, this is the vow of him who does good to me. This (vow) is like the desire-yielding gem. It gives salvation to men. A man would get the fruit (of the performance) of a Vājapeya sacrifice by reading about and listening to it.

CHAPTER FORTY

Saphalā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Which Ekādaśī would take place (i.e. fall) in the dark half of Pauṣa? What is the name and the manner of observing it? Tell this to me in detail, O master; tell me which deity is worshipped on that day.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-14. O lord of kings, due to the bond of affection (between us) I shall tell (it to you). O king, I am not so much pleased with sacrifice in which profuse gifts are given, as I am pleased with the Ekādaśī-vow. Therefore, with all efforts, the day of Viṣṇu should be observed (as the day of vow). O you famous among the most religious, this is true, not false. On the Ekādaśī day falling in the dark half of Pauṣa and called Saphalā, a man should duly worship god Viṣṇu. This auspicious Ekādaśī should be observed in the same manner as told before. O king, as Śeṣa is (the best) of the serpents, as (Garuḍa) the eater of serpents is (the best) of the birds, as Viṣṇu is (the best) of the deities, as brāhmaṇa is (the best) of the bipeds, so the day of Ekādaśī is the best of the vows. O king, those men who are devoted to the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, and observe the vow of Ekādaśī, are always venerable to me. They are united with wealth here (i.e. in this world) only, and after death they obtain salvation. O king, on (the day of) the Saphalā (Ekādaśī) a man should worship Viṣṇu by uttering his (various) names, with coconuts, betel-nuts, citron-fruits, jambīra-fruits, pomegranates, and auspicious dhātrī-fruits, so also with cloves, badari-fruits and especially with mangoes. So also he should worship the lord of gods with incense and lights. Especially on the Saphalā (day) he should cause to be given (i.e. should give) the present of lights. He should keep awake along with Viṣṇu's devotees during (that) night. O king, listen to the religious merit of him, of a concentrated mind, who keeps awake during that night (just) for (the time of) the twinkling of an eye. No sacrifice is equal to that. There is

no sacred place like that. All (other) vows do not deserve (i.e. are not equal to even) the sixteenth part (of the Saphalā-vow), O lord of kings.

15-23. He who thus keeps awake, gets the fruit which cannot be obtained by (practising) penance for thousands of years. O best king, listen to the auspicious account of the Saphalā. There was a city of (i.e. belonging to) Māhiṣmata well-known as Campāvatī. That royal sage had five young sons. Of them the eldest was always engaged in (committing) sins. He was an adulterer, fond of prostitutes and a drunkard. The sinner spent his father's money in that only. He was always engaged in bad behaviour and censured brāhmaṇas. He always censured Viṣṇu's devotees and deities. Noticing his son to be like this, king Māhiṣmata called him, among the sons, by the name Lumpaka (i.e. a robber). His father and brothers expelled him from the kingdom. He was thus abandoned like an obstructor by the attendants also. Lumpaka also, who was abandoned like that, then thought: 'I have indeed been expelled from the kingdom by my kinsmen and my father.' Thinking like this he set his heart on (committing) sins. 'I must go to a fearful, dense forest; and from it I shall plunder the entire city of my father.'

24-31a. Thinking like this, Lumpaka, by a lucky coincidence, went out of that city, and went into that dense forest. He was always engaged in killing living beings. He was the treasure of the arts of stealing and gambling. That sinner plundered the entire city. He, moving in the city for stealing, was arrested by night-stalkers. To them he said: "I am the son of king Māhiṣmata." He who committed sinful deeds was released by them, and again came (back) to the forest. He was fond of to (eating) flesh and fruits. Near that wicked man there was the abode of Viṣṇu. There was an old Aśvattha tree (standing there) for many years. The tree had great divineness in the forest. That Lumpaka, of a sinful mind, living just there, ate, after many days had passed, fruits of trees due to some collection of (his) religious merit on the tenth day of the dark half of Pauṣa.

31b-38. Lumpaka who was the most sinful, was oppressed by heat. He was without clothes and lost his sight. Being oppressed by severe cold, he did not enjoy the pleasure of sleep near that tree of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. He was as it were dead.

Covering his mouth (i.e. his lips) with his teeth, he passed the entire night. Even at sunrise, the most sinful one did not (re-) gain consciousness. (Thus) Lumpaka remained unconscious on that day of Saphalā. When the Sun was in the middle (of the sky) that Lumpaka got (back) consciousness. He looked here and there; was pained; and tumbling from his seat, he again and again walked like a lame man with his feet. He went into the middle part (i.e. the interior) of the forest, was emaciated by hunger and was oppressed. That Lumpaka, of a wicked mind, did not have strength to kill a living being. O king, at that time that Lumpaka did not obtain fruits. When he came there, the Sun had set. 'O pity, what will happen (to me)?' Like this he wailed. There, at the root of the tree he placed many fruits and said:

39-44a. "May Viṣṇu be pleased with these fruits." Having spoken like this Lumpaka did not get sleep on (that) night. Viṣṇu regarded his (sleeplessness as) keeping awake at night (in his honour), and took the placing of fruits as being worshipped with fruits (on the day) of Saphalā. That Lumpaka observed this vow accidentally only. By the power of that religious merit he obtained the kingdom free from troubles. Till it was sunrise, Viṣṇu went to heaven. At that time a divine voice was heard: "By the favour of Saphalā, O son, you will obtain the kingdom." When he said "All right", he became one of a divine form. O king, he had a great inclination towards Viṣṇu.

44b-49. He, rich with divine ornaments, obtained the kingdom which was free from trouble. He ruled over the kingdom for fifteen years. By the favour of Kṛṣṇa he had charming sons and a (charming) wife. Having quickly abandoned his kingdom and having given it to his son, he went to Kṛṣṇa's proximity, going where a man does not meet with grief. O king, he who observes the excellent vow of Saphalā in this way, gets happiness in this world, and after death would obtain salvation. Those men who are engrossed in (the vow of) Saphalā, are blessed. Their existence is fruitful. No doubt should be raised about this. A man, by reciting, listening to and observing the (vow of Saphalā) obtains the fruit of a Rājasūya-sacrifice, O king.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

Putradā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-2. O Kṛṣṇa, you have told (me about) the auspicious (vow of) the Saphalā Ekādaśī. Favour me and tell me about the one that would fall in the bright fortnight (of the month of Pauṣa). What is its name? What is the manner of it (i.e. in which way is it) to be observed ? Which is the deity that is propitiated on that (day)? With whom are you, Puruṣottama himself, pleased?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

3-12. O king, listen, I shall tell (you about) the one that would fall in the bright half (of Pauṣa). O great king, with a desire for the good of the people, I shall tell about it. O king, it is to be carefully observed in the manner (as told) before. Its name is Putradā. It is great, and removes all sins. Its superintending deity is Viṣṇu. He gives (all) desired objects and all prosperity. No greater (vow) than this (exists) in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. Viṣṇu makes a man possessed with knowledge and makes him successful. O king, listen. I shall tell you an auspicious tale that removes sins. Formerly there lived king Suketumat in the city of Bhadrāvatī. His queen was Campakā by name. The sonless king passed his time in (entertaining) desires. The king did not obtain a son who would continue his line. Then the king thought of righteous deeds for a long time. 'What should I do? Where should I go? How can I have a son?' King Suketumat did not derive pleasure from his kingdom or his city. Every day, along with his chaste wife, he became unhappy. The couple was always full of anxiety and grief. His (dead) ancestors drank lukewarm water offered by him. 'We do not see anybody who will gratify us after the king'. Thinking like this his manes were unhappy.

13-19a. The king did not find pleasure in his kinsmen, allies, ministers, friends, so also elephants, horses and foot-soldiers. Despondency always prevailed in the king's mind. 'A man who is without a son does not get the fruit of his existence. The house of a sonless person is always desolate. His heart is always

unhappy. Without a son freedom from the debt of (one's) ancestors, deities and men is not possible. Therefore, with all efforts a man should produce a son. Those with religious merit, in whose house a son would be born, get success in this world, and an auspicious position in the next world. In the house of those men who practise righteous deeds long life, (good) health, and wealth prevail. O king, (these) cannot be had without religious merit and devotion to Viṣṇu. I think that sons are certainly the wealth (of a person).'

19b-31. Thinking like this the king did not get happiness. King Suketumat thought (like this) in the early morning and at night. He thought of destroying himself. Then the king, seeing misfortune in (i.e. due to) suicide, saw his body fallen and his sonlessness. Then according to his intellect, he saw (i.e. thought about) his welfare. Then the king mounted upon a horse, went to a dense forest. The family-priest and others did not know (that) the king had gone. In the dense forest resorted to by beasts and birds, the king roamed, observing the forest-trees like vaṭa, aśvattha, bilva, kharjūra, and panasa, so also bakula, saptaparṇa, tinduka, and tila. The king also saw (trees like) śāla, tamāla and sarala. (He also saw) trees like iṅgudī, kakubha, śleṣmātaka, sallaka, karamarda, pāṭala and badara also. He also saw aśoka (trees), palāśa (trees), wolves, hares, wild cats, buffaloes, porcupines and camara (deer). The king saw serpents that had half come out from the ant-hills, and wild intoxicated elephants with their young ones. (He saw) lords of herds having four tusks and accompanied by the female elephants and herds. Seeing the elephants of him, the king thought: 'The lord moving among them obtained great beauty.' The king observed the forest full of great wonders. Hearing on his way the cries of jackals and of owls, and seeing various bears and deer, he roamed in the forest.

32-36a. In this way the king saw the forest. When the Sun had gone to the middle (of the sky), he being oppressed with hunger and thirst, ran here and there. The king with his throat and neck dry thought: 'What deed have I done (by which) I have met with such grief? With sacrifices and worships I have pleased the deities. I have pleased brāhmaṇas with gifts and desired meals. I have always greatly looked after my subjects

like my (own) son. Due to what have I met with this great, terrible distress?' The king who was thinking like this, went ahead in the forest.

36b-42. By the efficacy of his good deeds, he saw an excellent lake. It was being touched by (i.e. had the contact of) fish. It looked very beautiful due to lotuses. It also looked beautiful with ducks, ruddy geese and royal swans. It was full of many alligators, fishes and other aquatic animals. The fortunate king saw many hermitages of sages near the lake, along with many omens suggesting auspiciousness. His right eye throbbed. So also his right hand, indicating auspicious fruit, throbbed. Seeing on its lake sages muttering Vedic prayers in an undertone, the king stood in front of the sages. The king saluted separately (i.e. individually) the sages of praise-worthy vows by joining the palms of his hands and repeatedly prostrating before them in the manner of a staff. The sages also said (to him): "O king, we are pleased with you."

The king said:

43. Who are you here? Tell me what your names are. Why have you assembled here? Tell the truth to me.

The sages said:

44-45. O king, we are Viśvedevāḥ.[1] We have come here for a bath. Māgha has come near (i.e. will commence) on the fifth day from today. O king, today is Ekādaśī called Putradā. Viṣṇu gives a son to those who observe this (Ekādaśī), O king.

The king said:

46. I have a great uncertainty about producing a son. If you are pleased, then give me a son.

The sages said:

47-53. O king, today only it is the Ekādaśī called Putradā. Do this well-known vow, which is the best (vow). O lord of

1. Viśvedevāḥ: Name of a particular group of deities, ten in number, and supposed to be sons of Viśvā. Their names are: Vasu, Satya, Kratu, Dakṣa Kāla, Kāma, Dhṛti, Kuru, Purūravas, and Mādravas.

kings, after ablution and by the favour of us and of Viṣṇu, you will certainly have a son.

By these words of them, and the advice of the sages, the king observed the excellent vow which is (that of) Putradā, according to the (proper) rules. Having broken his fast on Dvādaśī the king came home. Then the queen conceived. At the time of her delivery a bright son was born. By means of his righteous deeds he pleased his father. He became a king (later). Therefore, O king, the excellent vow of Putradā should be observed. I told it to you for the good of the people. Those who, with a concentrated mind, observe this Putradā vow, obtain sons in this world and after death go to heaven. O king, by reciting and listening to it, a man would obtain the fruit of (having performed) the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

The Vow of Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-2. Very nice, O Kṛṣṇa, O Jagannātha, O first god, O lord of the world. Be pleased, and tell me. Show favour to me. Which would be the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Māgha? What is the manner in which it is to be observed? Tell me this in detail.

The lord said:

3-4. O best king, listen. That Ekādaśī which would fall in the dark half of Māgha is known as Ṣaṭtilā and destroys all sins. Listen to the auspicious, sin-removing account of Ṣaṭtilā, which the best sage Pulastya narrated to Dālabhya.

Dālabhya said:

5-7. O brāhmaṇa, tell that truly (to me) how those living beings who have come to the mortal world, who commit sins, and are having various sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, who take away others' wealth, who are deluded by great addictions,

do not go to hell. O glorious one, (please) tell me (how) sin perishes (even) by means of some small gift.

Pulastya said:

8-15a. Very nice, very nice, O you illustrious one, this is a secret, very difficult to be had. I shall tell it, O best brāhmaṇa, as I am asked by you, which is not told to anyone by deities like Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra. When the month of Māgha has arrived, a man being pure after bath, and with his senses curbed, and without lust, anger, pride, jealousy, greed and wickedness, having remembered the gods, having washed his feet with water, should take the cowdung fallen on the ground, scatter sesamum-seeds, cotton and should get fashioned balls one hundred and eight (in number). No doubt should be raised in this matter. Then when the month of Māgha has come, and if the Āṣāḍha star appears (in the sky) or if it is the beginning of the dark half, he should observe the restraints of Ekādaśī at an auspicious time. Listen to the manner (as) I (tell you). Having worshipped the god of gods, having bathed well, being restrained and pure, he should, by fasting on the Ekādaśī day, recite the names of Kṛṣṇa. He should keep awake at night, and should get performed a sacrifice first.

15b-20a. Again on the second day he should worship Viṣṇu, the lord of the lordly gods. Along with sandal, agaru, and camphor, he should offer eatables and a mixture of rice and peas with a few spices. Then remembering the lord by (uttering) his name, he should repeatedly offer to (the deity) called Kṛṣṇa respectful offering full of pumpkin gourds, coconuts or citrons. In the absence of all (these) (he should make the respectful offering) with betel-nuts, after properly worshipping Janārdana (i.e. Viṣṇu). "O Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, you are kind. Be the refuge of those who have no refuge. O Viṣṇu, favour them who are plunged in the ocean of mundane existence. Salutation to you, O lotus-eyed one; salutation to you, the creator of all; salutation to you, O Subrahmaṇya, O ancestor of great men. O lord of the world, accept, along with Lakṣmī, this offering, which is made by me." (This is) the hymn recited at the time of making a respectful offering. O brāhmaṇa, after that he should worship (the deity)

and should cause to be given (to it) an earthen pitcher along with an umbrella, sandals and garments. (He should say:)

20b-23. "May Kṛṣṇa be pleased with me." A dark cow should be given according to his capacity to the best brāhmaṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, he, expert in recognizing a worthy recipient, should give him a pot full of sesamum seeds. O sage, the black sesamum seeds are recommended for bath and food. He should with effort give them to the best brāhmaṇa according to his capacity. For as many thousands of years as many sprouts from the sesamum seeds are there is the field, he is honoured in heaven. These six uses of sesamum seeds destroy sins: bathing with the sesamum seeds (i.e. with water mixed with them), rubbing (one's body) with sesamum seeds, offering a sacrifice with sesamum seeds, offering water with sesamum seeds, giving sesamum seeds, and eating them.

Nārada (Yudhiṣṭhira?) said:

24-25. O Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, O you of mighty arms, O you the creator of everything, salutation to you. What kind of fruit is due to the Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī? Tell it to me, O Yādava, along with an episode, if you are pleased with me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

26-32. O king, listen to what I saw as it took place. O Nārada(?), in the mortal world formerly there lived a brāhmaṇa woman. She was always engaged in observing vows and was always engrossed in worshipping deities. She was engaged in observing the monthly fasts; she was very devoted to me. She observed fasts in honour of Kṛṣṇa, and was intent on worshipping me. O best brāhmaṇa(?), she tormented her body with fasts. The very chaste woman always offered her house etc. due to her devotion to gods, brāhmaṇas and maidens. O brāhmaṇa(?), she always took delight in great expiation. She did not give alms to beggars; she did not gratify brāhmaṇas. Then, O brāhmaṇa(?), after a long time I thought: "There is no doubt that her body is purified by means of vows and expiations. By mortifying her body she honoured devotees of Viṣṇu. She did not offer food, by means of which great satisfaction would be had." O brāhmaṇa(?),

knowing like this, I went to the mortal world. Taking the form of a Kāpāla.[1] I begged alms in my (begging) bowl. (She said:)

33-43. "O brāhmaṇa, what for have you come? Where will you go later? Tell (this to me)." I again said: "O beautiful woman, give (me) alms." With great wrath she threw a lump of clay into the copper-vessel. Then O brāhmaṇa, I again went (back) to heaven. Then by the power of her practising the vow, the female ascetic of great vows, bodily came to heaven after a long time. Due to the gift of the lump of a clay she got a charming house; but O brāhmaṇa sage(?), it was without heaps of grains. When she would observe (i.e. she observed) the house, she did not see anything there. Then, O brāhmaṇa(?), she moved out of the house and came to me. She spoke these words full of great anger: "By means of many kinds of vows, expiations and fasts, and with worship, I propitiated the god, the guardian of the entire world. O Janārdana, nothing is seen there in my house." Then I said to her: "O you of a great vow, go home. Wives of gods, full of great curiosity and wonder will come to see you. Do not open the door unless they recite the auspicious (account of) Ṣaṭtilā." Thus addressed by me, the woman went (back to her house). O brāhmaṇa(?), in the meanwhile gods' wives came (to her house). There they said, "We have come to see you. O beautiful woman, open the door (so that) we shall see you."

The woman said:

44. If you want to see me, you must especially tell the truth —the meritorious vow of Ṣaṭtilā—for opening the door.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

45-54. None of them told her (about) the vow of *Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī*. Then one of them told (about) the vow of the Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī. The other one then said: "The woman should be seen by me." Then after opening the door, the woman was seen by them. O best brāhmaṇa(?), like that woman a goddess or a female gandharva or a demoness or a female serpent was never seen by them be-

1. Kāpāla: A follower of the Śaiva sect—the Left-hand Order characterised by carrying skulls of men in the form of garlands and eating and drinking from them.

fore. By the advice of the goddesses the vow of Ṣaṭtilā which gives pleasures and salvation was observed by that woman of a true vow. She, endowed with beauty and loveliness, obtained in a moment wealth, grains, garments, gold and silver. By the prowess of Ṣaṭtilā her house was endowed with everything. In a moment she became endowed with beauty and loveliness. One should not be very greedy; one should avoid fraud with regard to wealth. According to his wealth he should cause to give (i.e. should give) sesamum seeds and garments. A man obtains good health in very existence. He does not get poverty, or misery or misfortune. (All this) will not take place due to fasting on Ṣaṭtilā. O king, there is no doubt that a giver of sesamum seeds in this way is free from all sins without any trouble. (Giving) a gift duly to a worthy recipient removes all sins. O best king, there is no misery or exertion in the body.

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

Jayā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-3. O Kṛṣṇa, you have said well. O lord, you are the first god. (There are four kinds of living beings:) generated by sweat; oviparous; plants; viviparous. You make and mar them; you protect and destroy them. You told (me) about Ṣaṭtilā falling in Māgha. O god, favour (me) and tell me which Ekādaśī would fall in the bright half (of that month). What is the manner of it (i.e. the manner in which it is observed? Which deity is worshipped on that day?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

4-8a. O lord of kings, I shall tell you about (the Ekādaśī) that would fall in the bright half of Māgha. It is called Jayā. It is well known. It is great and removes all sins. It is pure. It destroys sins. It gives desired objects and salvation to men. It destroys (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, and it (also)

destroys the state of a goblin. Men are not reduced to the condition of ghosts when the vow of this (Ekādaśī) is observed by them. There is no (Ekādaśī) other than this that destroys sins and gives salvation. O king, for this reason it should always be observed. O best king, listen to an ancient auspicious tale. I have told about its greatness in the Padma Purāṇa.

8b-15a. Once Indra ruled in heaven. Gods happily lived in that charming (heaven). They were engaged in drinking nectar and were waited upon by celestial nymphs. In it there was a grove called Nandana. It was served by (i.e. full of) Pārijāta trees. Gods rejoice and are pleased by the celestial nymphs there. Once Indra, the lord of fifty crores (of the residents of heaven), rejoicing as he liked, joyfully made (the celestial nymphs) to dance. Gandharvas sang there. There was a gandharva (named) Puṣpadantaka. Citrasena was also there. So also there was Mālinī, the daughter of Citrasena. There was Citrasena's wife also. Puṣpadantī was born of Mālinī. Puṣpadanta's son was Mālyavat by name. Mālyavat was very much fascinated by the beauty of Puṣpadantī. She subjugated Mālyavat with her glances.

15b-22. Listen to (the description of) her charm with loveliness and her beauty. Her arms are as it were the nooses (thrown) round the neck by Cupid. Her eyes were long up to the ears, were reeling and red in the corners. Her ears looked beautiful due to the ear-rings. She had a conch-shaped neck, and was adorned with divine ornaments. Her stout and raised breasts resembled golden pitchers. Her waist was lean, excellent and could be grasped in the fist. Her buttocks were expansive. Her hips and loins were large. Her feet were beautiful and bright like red-lotus. By (that) Puṣpavatī who was like this, Mālyavat was very much fascinated. To please Indra, the two came there to dance. They sang there and were waited upon by bands of celestial nymphs. The two Puṣpadantī and Mālyavat, had their bodies filled with cupid (i.e. the feeling of love). Due to love for each other they were infatuated. With their mind perplexed they did not sing chaste songs.

23-31. Influenced by the arrows of Cupid they had rivetted their eyes upon each other. Indra knew that their minds were attached to each other. Due to the lapse in clapping of the

hands and in the measuring (of time), so also due to the execution of the song, Indra, thinking that it was an insult to him, got angry with both of them and giving them a curse said these (words): "Fie upon you; you are fallen; you stupid ones have disobeyed me. Be turned into goblins as husband and wife; go to the mortal world, enjoying the fruit of your deed." Thus cursed by Indra the two with their minds distressed, being deluded by Indra's curse reached the Himālaya mountain. Both became goblins and met with terrible grief also. Their minds were tormented, and met with misery caused by snow. Being deluded, they were not aware of their state of a gandharva or a celestial nymph. They were oppressed by summer and the effect of bodily sins. Troubled by (the fruit of) their deeds they did not get pleasure or peace at night. Talking to each other they moved in the mountain-caves. They were chattering their teeth and had horripilation on their bodies.

32-40a. Then that male goblin said to his wife, the female goblin: "What great, fierce and thrilling sin have we committed due to which we have obtained (i.e. are reduced to) goblinhood as a result of our bad deeds? Hell is looked upon as fierce, and goblinhood as painful. Therefore, with all efforts, one should not commit a sin." Thus being anxious, they were overpowered with grief. Due to their good luck, the Ekādaśī of Māgha, named Jayā and well-known as the best among days, came. When that day came, O king, they remained there without food and without drinking water. They did not kill any living being; they did not eat leaves and fruits. Near the Aśvattha tree, they remained always full of grief. O king, while they remained like that the sun set. Night, that was fierce, terrible and fatal, approached. The two, trembling and clinging to each other with their bodies and arms, then slept there on the (bare) ground. They did not have sleep, or coition, nor did they get pleasure.

40b-46. O best king, they were thus troubled by the curse of Indra. When they were thus unhappy the night rolled by. The sun rose when the day of Dvādaśī came (i.e. on the Dvādaśī day). O best king, I held in my heart (i.e. thought to myself) about their salvation. They observed the good vow of Jayā and kept awake at night. Listen to what happened by

the efficacy of that vow. When the Dvādaśī day came, and when the Jayā-vow was observed like that, their goblinhood disappeared by Viṣṇu's prowess. Puṣpadantī and Mālyavat had their forms as before. They had the same affection as before, had put on the (same) ornaments as before. They got into an aeroplane and went to the beautiful heaven. Having gone in front of the lord of gods (Indra), they gladly saluted him. Seeing them like that, Indra, being amazed said to them:

Indra said:

47. Tell me, due to what moral merit you who were reduced to goblinhood, who had received a curse from me, were freed and by which god.

Mālyavat said:

48-51. O lord, our goblinhood has gone by Viṣṇu's favour, the observance of the Jayā-vow, and the strength of devotion to you.

Hearing these (words) Indra also spoke again: "You have become sinless, pure, and have become adorable even to me. You have observed (the vow on) the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu; you are greatly attached to the devotion for Viṣṇu. There is no doubt that those mortals who adhere to (the vow of) the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, and are devoted to Kṛṣṇa, are adorable to us also."

Kṛṣṇa said:

52-54. For this reason, O king, the vow of the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu should be observed. O best king, Jayā removes the sin of a brāhmaṇa's murder. He who has observed the vow of Jayā, has given all gifts, has performed all sacrifices. He certainly rejoices in Vaikuṇṭha as long as a crore of kalpas. O king, by reciting or listening to (this account), one would obtain the fruit (of the performance) of Agniṣṭoma (sacrifice).

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

Vijayā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What is the name of the Ekādaśī that would fall (i.e. falls) in the dark half of Phālguna? O Vāsudeva, favour me and tell it to me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. Nārada asked the lotus-seated Brahmā: "O best of brāhmaṇas, favour me, and tell me about the religious merit due to the observance of the Vijayā Ekādaśī that would fall (i.e. that falls) in the dark half of Phālguna.

Brahmā said:

3-12. O Nārada, listen; I shall tell (you) a great account that removes sins. I have not narrated to anyone this Vijayā-vow which is ancient, pure, and which removes sins. There is no doubt that Vijayā gives victory to the kings. Formerly, Rāma went to the forest and lived in Pañcavaṭī for fourteen years with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa. The glorious wife, Sītā, of Rāma of a victorious nature, who lived there was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa through lustfulness. Due to that grief even Rāma was embarassed, and (while) wandering he saw Jaṭāyus who was dead. Then he, wandering in the forest, killed Kabandha. (Thẹn) his friendship with Sugrīva took place. The forces of the monkeys came together for Rāma. Then Sītā was seen in the (Aśoka) garden of Laṅkā by Hanūmat. He gave her the token of Rāma and performed a great feat. Then again having come back to Rāma, he told him the entire (account). Then Rāma, having heard the words of Hanūmat, was pleased to (take out) a march (against Rāvaṇa) with Sugrīva's consent. (He said to Lakṣmaṇa:) "O Saumitra, due to which religious merit this very unfathomable abode of Varuṇa (i.e. the ocean) full of aquatic animals, can be crossed? I do not see a means with which this (ocean) can be crossed easily."

Lakṣmaṇa said:

13-18. You alone are the first god, and the ancient, best man. In this island lives the sage Bakadālbhya. O Rāghava, his hermitage is at a distance of half a yojana from this place. O son (i.e. descendant) of Raghu, there are many other brāhmaṇas also. O best king, having gone (there), ask the best sage.

Having heard these extremely good words of Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma went to see that great sage Bakadālbhya. With his head (bent down) he saluted the sage, as a god (salutes) Viṣṇu. Then that sage having recognized that ancient best man who had entered the human body for some reason, was pleased, and said, "O Rāma what for have you come?"

Rāma said:

19-24. O brāhmaṇa, by your favour I have come along with the army to this shore of the ocean to conquer Laṅkā along with the demons. O sage, be favourable and tell me the means by which I shall cross the ocean. Now be pleased. O god, for this reason only I have come to see you.

Having heard the words of Rāma, the great sage Bakadālbhya, with his mind very much pleased, said to the lotus-eyed Rāma: "O Rāma, today you should observe the best among vows, having observed which you will be mightily victorious. Having conquered Laṅkā and the demons, you will obtain pure fame. Being concentrated in mind, observe this vow. The Vijayā Ekādaśī would fall in the dark half of the month of Phālguna.

25-35. O Rāma, by (the observance of) that vow you will get victory. You will, along with the monkeys, undoubtedly cross the ocean. O king, listen to the manner of this vow (i.e. in which the vow should be observed), which is fruitful. When the tenth day has arrived a man should cause to get fashioned a pitcher. He should place this decorated pitcher made of gold, silver, copper or clay and filled with water and with sprouts. He should put under it seven (kinds of) grains, and barley upon it. On it he should place the golden (image of) the lord Nārāyaṇa. When the eleventh day comes, he should bathe in the morning.

Along with a wreath round the neck and unguents he should keep it (the pitcher) steady. He should worship it especially with betel nuts and coconuts, so also with sandal, incense, lights and various offerings of eatables. O Rāma, the day is passed in front of it with (i.e. in narrating) good tales. A wise man should also keep awake at night in front of it. For the continuous observance of the vow he should light a lamp of ghee. When the twelfth day comes, on the rise of the sun he should take the jar to the region of water and place it in a river or into a stream and should worship it duly. He should give that jar to a brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas. O lord of kings, he should cause to give (i.e. he should give) the great gifts (Mahādānas) along with the jar (to a brāhmaṇa). O Rāma, observe along with the chiefs of troops carefully the vow in this manner. You will be victorious."

36-39. Having heard like this, that Rāma did as he was told. When the son (i.e. descendant) of Raghu (i.e. Rāma) observed that vow, he became victorious. He got (back) Sītā. He conquered Laṅkā, killed Rāvaṇa in the battle. O son, those men who observe the vow in this manner, get success in this world, and get the inexhaustible other world (i.e. they live permanently in heaven). For this reason, O son, the vow of Vijayā should be observed. The greatness of Vijayā destroys all sins. A man by reciting (about) or listening (to this vow) would obtain the fruit of the performance of the Vājapeya sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

Āmalakī Ekādaśī

Śrīkṛṣṇa said*:

1. O Kṛṣṇa, I have heard about the importance and the great fruit of Vijayā. Now tell me about (the importance of) that (Āmalakī Ekādaśī) which falls in the bright half of the month of Phālguna.

*It should be Yudhiṣṭhira.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-4. O son of Dharma (i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira), O illustrious one, listen. I shall tell you about that (Ekādaśī) which the glorious Vasiṣṭha explained to Māndhātṛ, when he (i.e. Vasiṣṭha) was asked by Māndhātṛ. This is, O king, especially said to be the speciality of Phālguna. The Āmalakī-vow is auspicious and gives (i.e. takes one) to Viṣṇu's world. A man should go to the root of Āmalakī (tree), and should keep awake there (during the night). Having kept awake there for that night, he would obtain the fruit of (giving) a thousand cows.

Māndhātṛ said:

5-6. O best brāhmaṇa, when did this Āmalakī spring up? Tell all this to me. I have great curiosity (to hear about it). Why is it (said to be) pure? Why is it (said to be) the destroyer of sins? Due to what would a man obtain the fruit of (giving) a thousand cows by keeping awake on it?

Vasiṣṭha said:

7-17a. O glorious one, I shall tell (you) how it came about on the earth. The great tree of Āmalakī destroys all (kinds of) sins. When formerly (all this) was just an ocean only (i.e. when the earth was inundated in water), when the immovable and the movable had perished, when hosts of gods and demons had disappeared, and serpents and fiends had perished, then the lord of the gods, the highest soul, the ancient one went to Brahman, his highest and immutable position. Then from the spittle of Brahmā, keeping awake, a drop lustrous like the moon was produced, and it fell down on the eatrh. From that drop was produced the great Āmalakī tree, having many branches and twigs bent due to the burden of fruits. It was declared as the first shoot among all the trees. Then, after it Brahmā created all these beings—the revered God created gods, demons, gandharvas, yakṣas, fiends, serpents and so also the spotless great sages. Those gods came there, where Dhātrī (the Āmalaka tree) dear to Viṣṇu, stood, and O glorious one, seeing it they were very much amazed. They stood there thinking, 'We do not know this tree.' When they were thinking like this, a heavenly voice said to them:

"This excellent tree is Āmalakī, said to belong to Viṣṇu. Merely by remembering it a man would get the fruit of (giving) a cow. By touching it one's religious merit is doubled, and by wearing it it is tripled.

17b-21. Therefore, making all efforts, a man should always resort to Āmalakī. It is said to remove all sins, to belong to Viṣṇu and to destroy sins. At its root lives Viṣṇu; and the grandsire (i.e. Brahmā) stays above it; and in its trunk the highest lord, the revered Rudra lives. All the sages (live) in its branches, and the deities (live) in its twigs. The gods remain in its leaves, and the Maruts in its flowers. All the lords of the created beings are similarly settled in its fruits. I have declared this Dhātrī to be full of all gods. Therefore, it is most adorable for those who are greatly devoted to Viṣṇu."

The sages said:

22. We do not know who you are. Due to what have you become the cause? Tell us the truth—whether you are a god or someone else.

23-27a. Seeing the amazed wise men (*the voice said*:) "I am that ancient Viṣṇu, who is the creator of all beings and all worlds." Having heard those words of the god of gods, Brahmā's sons then began praising the god who was beginningless and endless. "Obeisance to the Being, the self-born one, the soul, the supreme soul. Repeated and constant salutations to the unfalling one, to the endless one (i.e. Viṣṇu). Repeated salutations to Dāmodara, to the omniscient one, to the lord of sacrifices." Thus praised there by the sages, lord Viṣṇu was pleased. He said to the sages: "What desired (objects) should I give you?"

The sages said:

27b-29. O venerable one, if you are pleased, then with a desire for our good, tell us (about) some vow which gives the fruit of heaven and salvation, which gives wealth, grains, religious merit, and pleasing oneself, which requires little exertion, which gives many fruits and which is the best vow among vows, having observed which one is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

Viṣṇu said:

30-32. When in the bright half of Phālguna, the Dvādaśī comes with Puṣya (i.e. the eighth lunar mansion appearing in the sky), it would be very auspicious and would destroy great sins. O best brāhmaṇas, listen to the special (vow) to be observed on that day. Having gone to Āmalakī, one should keep awake there. One would be free from all sins and would obtain the fruit of giving a thousand cows. O brāhmaṇas, I have told you about this vow, the best of all vows. Having worshipped Viṣṇu (residing) in it, one is not dropped from Viṣṇu's world.

The sages said:

33-40. Tell us about the manner of (the observance of) this vow. How would it be perfect? What are the hymns, what are the salutations, and what are the deities that are declared? How is a gift (given)? How is a bath (taken)? What is said to be the manner of worship? So also tell us accurately the hymn for offering respectful offering and worship.

Viṣṇu said:

O best brāhmaṇas, listen to the manner (of the observance) of this vow. Having remained without food on the Ekādaśī day and the next day, he should, after cleaning his teeth, utter the words, "O lotus-eyed one, O you unfallen one, I shall (now) eat. Be my refuge." He should not talk with the fallen, the thieves, so also the heretics, so also with men of bad conduct, with those who have violated the limits (of good conduct), and who have outraged their preceptors' wives. Then the wise man, restrained and composed, should duly bathe in the afternoon, in a river, or a tank or a lake or at home. First, he should apply clay (to his body) and then should bathe. "O you earth, who are trodden by horses, chariots and by Viṣṇu, O you earth, remove my sin, and the wicked deed that I have done."

41-48. This is the hymn (to be recited at the time) of (applying) the clay (to the body). "O water, you are the life of all beings and protector of their bodies. Salutation to the lord of the species that are generated by sweat and that sprout as plants. Let this bath of me be (as it were) I have bathed at all holy

places, deep lakes, streams, in rivers and reservoirs." This is the hymn to be recited at the time of bathing. Having got fashioned the golden (image of) the sage Jāmadagnya (i.e. Paraśurāma) of the weight of a māṣaka of gold, or half of it, he should come home and perform the sacrifice for the worship. Then with all the requisites he should go to the Āmalakī (tree). Then having (thus) gone to the Āmalakī (tree), and having cleaned (the region) all round (it), he should place there a jar having no scratch, to the accompaniment of hymns, having five gems (attached to it), made fragrant with divine perfumes, with an umbrella and a pair of sandals, and smeared with white sandal, with a wreath and a garland attached to its neck, incensed with all (kinds) of incenses; he should make it charming by kindling a series of lamps all around; upon it he should place a pot full of divine parched grains. On the pot he should place (the image of) the very lustrous Jāmadagnya.

49-52. (Worshipping) the feet (of the image, (he should say "Salutation to Viśoka;" (worshipping) its knees (he should say) "(Salutation to) Viśvarūpin." (Worshipping) its thighs (he should say) "(Salutation to) Ugra." (Worshipping) its waist (he should say) "(Salutation to) Dāmodara." (Worshipping) its belly (he should say) "(Salutation to) Padmanābha." (Worshipping its chest he should say) "(Salutation to) Śrīvatsadhārin." (Worshipping) its left arm, (he should say) "Salutation to Cakrin." (Worshipping) its right arm (he should say) "Salutation to Gadin." (Worshipping) its neck (he should say) "Salutation to Vaikuṇṭha." (Worshipping) its mouth (he should say) "Salutation to Yajñamukha". (Worshipping) its nose (he should say) "Salutation to Viśokanidhi." (Worshipping) its eyes (he should say) "Salutation to Vāsudeva." (Worshipping) its forehead (he should say) "Salutation to Vāmana." (Worshipping) its eyebrows (he should say) "Salutation to Rāma." He should worship its head saying "Salutation to the Sarvātman."

53-54. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of worshipping (the deity). Then to the superior god of gods he should, with a devoted mind, offer a respectful offering with a white fruit. Then, with a devoted mind he should keep awake by means of dances, songs, musical instruments, religious tales and eulogies.

55-63. He should similarly pass the entire night by means of (listening to, reciting) accounts about Viṣṇu. Then by (repeating) Viṣṇu's names, he should go round the Dhātrī (tree). (The repetition of the names should be done for) one hundred and eight or twentyeight times. Then, in the morning, having waved a light (in front of the image) of Viṣṇu, and having honoured a brāhmaṇa, he should offer all that to him (saying) "In the Jāmadagnya ghaṭa there are a couple of garments and two sandals. May Keśava, in the form of Jāmadagnya, be pleased with me." Then he should touch and go round the Āmalakī (tree). Having then bathed duly, he should feed brāhmaṇas. Then surrounded by (i.e. along with the members of) his fraternity he should eat. I shall tell you about the entire religious merit (obtained) by doing like this. There is no doubt that he gets the fruit which is had at all the holy places, by means of all (kinds of) gifts, and which is greater than (that of) all sacrifices. I have thus narrated to you in full the vow that is the best of (all) vows.

Saying so, the lord of gods vanished there only. All the sages also did all that completely. In the same way, O lord of kings, (please) observe this vow which is hard to practise and which frees (one from) all sins.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. I have heard about the Āmalakī (vow) in the bright half of Phālguna. What would be (i.e. what is) the name of the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Caitra?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O lord of kings, listen to the sin-destroying account, which Lomaśa, when he was asked by emperor Māndhātṛ, told (to him).

Māndhātṛ said:

3. O venerable one, with a desire for the well-being of the people, I desire to hear what the name of the Ekādaśī in the first half of Caitra would be. What is the manner of it (i.e. in which way is it observed)? What is its fruit? (Please) favour (me) and tell it (to me).

Lomaśa said:

4-8. The Ekādaśī in the dark half of Caitra is called Pāpamocanī. It is said to destroy the state of a goblin. Listen, O king, I shall tell its account which gives the desired objects, divine power, auspicious and righteous things, and destroys sins. Formerly in the forest called Caitraratha, full of bees, and resorted to by celestial nymphs, when the spring season had arrived, gandharva maidens rejoiced along with kinnaras by (playing upon) musical instruments. The residents of heaven (i.e. gods) led by Indra also sported there. There was nothing else as delightful as the Caitraratha forest. In that forest many sages practised profuse penance.

9-18a. A celestial nymph known as Mañjughoṣā started to infatuate an excellent sage named Medhāvin, best among sages, who was a celibate and lived there. Showing her devotion to him, she through fear of him remained just a krośa away in the vicinity of the hermitage, singing sweetly and pressing (i.e. playing upon) the lute agreeably. The mind-born Cupid, seeing her with flowers (worn by her) and sandal (applied to her body) and desiring to vanquish the best sages, the devotees of Śiva, lived in her body. (Mañjughoṣā) having, in due order, made her eyebrows the curved end of the bow, her glances the string of the bow, her eyes along with her eyelashes the arrows, her breasts the tent, started for victory. Mañjughoṣā became the army of that Cupid only. Seeing that sage Medhāvin she too was oppressed by the passion of love. That Medhāvin also, with his body shooting up with youth, shone (there). Wearing a white sacred thread and appearing like another Cupid, that Medhāvin lived in the auspicious hermitage of Cyavana.

18b-24. Having seen the best sage staying there, that Mañjughoṣā was overpowered by Cupid (i.e. passion of love)

and she sang gently. That best sage, having seen her singing like that, with her bracelets jingling and her anklets and girdle tinkling, was forcibly deluded by Cupid with his army. That beautiful woman Mañjughoṣā, seeing that sage like that, approached him and deluded him with feminine coquettish gestures; and keeping her lute down (on the ground) she embraced that lord of sages, as a creeper would encircle a tree shaking due to the velocity of the wind. That best sage, Medhāvin, too rejoiced with her. Seeing in that (forest) only her excellent body, his auspicious nature left him, and he was influenced by the nature of Cupid. The lover did not know (i.e. care for) night or day, while rejoicing with her. Due to (i.e. in) the violation of (good) conduct, the sage passed a period of many years. Mañjughoṣā set out to go to the divine world. While going she said to the best sage, rejoicing (with her): "O brāhmaṇa, give me the order to go to my own region."

Medhāvin said:

25-30. O you beautiful one, today only just at the beginning of the nightfall you have come. Stay with me till (it is the time for my) morning prayer.

Hearing these words of the sage, she was frightened. She, afraid of the sage's curse, again delighted that sage for many years, O best king. She rejoiced with the sage for fiftyfive years nine months and three days. (But that period) was just half a night for him. When that much time passed, she again said to the sage: "O Brāhmaṇa, give me the order to go (back). I have to go home."

Medhāvin said:

It is (just) the morning. Listen to my words. Be steady till I offer my evening prayer.

Hearing these words of the sage, she was full of joy. Smiling slightly, she of a bright smile again spoke:

The celestial nymph said:

31-38. O sinless best brāhmaṇa, how long your prayer has

extended! (Please) favour me, and take into consideration the time that has passed.

Hearing these words of her, the best brāhmaṇa, with his eyes dilated due to wonder, calculated the time that had passed. Fiftyseven years were passed (by him) with her. Then he got angry with her, and was (like fire) with rows of flames. He, seeing her of the nature of destruction, putting an end to his penance, became very angry, and discharging sparks of fire from his eyes, and noticing that his penance earned with great effort had been wasted with her (i.e. in her company), the sage Medhāvin with his lips throbbing and his senses agitated cursed her: "Be a female goblin. Fie upon you, a sinful woman of bad conduct, an unchaste woman, who loves sins (i.e. sinful conduct)." Parched by his curse, she remained bent with modesty. The beautiful woman, desiring the sage's favour said these words to him: "O best brāhmaṇa, (please) favour me. Appease your curse; for the friendship of the good takes place (even) by (walking together for) seven steps (or by exchanging seven words). O brāhmaṇa with you I have passed many years. For this reason, O lord, O you of a good vow, favour (me)."

The sage said:

39-42. O good woman, hear my words appeasing the curse. O sinful one, what have I to do with you? You destroyed (my) great penance. In the dark half of Caitra would fall (i.e. falls) the auspicious Ekādaśī called Pāpamocanikā, which destroys all sins. Having observed the pure vow of it (i.e. on that day, your) state of a female goblin will go away.

Having spoken like this Medhāvin went to his father's hermitage. Seeing him to have come (back), Cyavana said to him: "What is this that you have done? You have destroyed your religious merit, O son."

Medhāvin said:

43. O father, I committed a sin. I rejoiced with a celestial nymph. O father, tell me an expiation by means of which my sin would perish.

Cyavana said:

44-46. In the dark half of Caitra falls the (Ekādaśī) called Pāpamocanī. O son, when the vow of it is observed, the heap of sins would perish.

Hearing these words of his father, he observed that excellent vow. His sin perished and he became endowed with (the merit of) his penance. That Mañjughoṣā too, having observed that excellent vow, was freed from the state of a female goblin due to (having observed) that vow of Pāpamocanikā. That excellent celestial nymph taking a divine form went to heaven.

Lomaśa said:

47-49. O king, all the sin (however) little of those best men who observe the vow of the Pāpamocanikā, would perish. A man, by reciting (about) it, by listening (to its account) would obtain the fruit (of the gift) of a thousand cows. All those who have killed a brāhmaṇa or have snatched gold or are drunkards or have gone to the teacher's bed (i.e. have violated the wife of the preceptor) become free from sins by means of the observance of this vow. By its observance the excellent vow gives great religious merit.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

Kāmadā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Salutation to you, O Vāsudeva; tell me, Ekādaśī of which name would fall in the bright half of Caitra.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, listen attentively to an auspicious old tale which formerly Vasiṣṭha narrated to Dilīpa who had asked (him).

Dilīpa said:

3. O revered one, I desire to hear. Favour me and tell me what the name of the Ekādaśī that would fall in the bright half of Caitra, is.

Vasiṣṭha said:

4-12. O king, you have asked well. I shall tell (about it) to you. The Ekādaśī falling in the bright half of Caitra is Kāmadā by name. (This) Ekādaśī is most auspicious, and is a fire to the fuel of sins. O king, listen to this story which destroys sins, (and) which gives religious merit. Formerly in the beautiful city of Nāgapura, adorned with gold and jewels, lived very powerful nāgas led by Puṇḍarīka. In that city king Puṇḍarīka ruled. He was served by gandharvas, kinnaras, and celestial nymphs also. The excellent celestial nymph was Lalitā; and the (excellent) gandharva was Lalita; the couple, glowing with attachment, and oppressed by passion of love, rejoiced in their beautiful house which was full of wealth and grains. In the heart of Lalitā (her) husband always resided; (and) in his heart, that beautiful Lalitā always resided. Once Puṇḍarīka, remaining in his assembly, was sporting. Lalita, without his wife, was singing and dancing (there). Remembering Lalitā, his tongue stumbled over (i.e. while uttering) an arrangement of words. Knowing the state of his mind, the best nāga Karkoṭaka reported his error in (uttering) the arrangement of words to Puṇḍarīka.

13-20. Hearing the words of Karkoṭaka, Puṇḍarīka, the king of the nāgas, with his eyes red due to anger, became extremely fierce. He then cursed Lalita who was singing and was overpowered by the passion of love: "O you of a wicked mind, be a demon that eats raw flesh, and that eats human beings, since, being influenced by (the love for) your wife, you are singing before me." As a result of his words, he (i.e. Lalita) got a demon's form, O best king. His face was fierce. His eyes were deformed. He caused fear even when just seen. His arms were as long as a yojana. His mouth resembled a cave. His eyes were like the moon and the sun. His neck was like a mountain. His nostrils were (just) hollows. His lips were a yojana in length. O lord of kings, his body rose (up to) eight yojanas. He, as

result of his deed(s) became a demon of this type. And that Lalitā, seeing her husband thus deformed was oppressed by great grief, and thought to herself: "What do (i.e. should) I do? Where do (i.e. should) I go? My husband is troubled by the curse." Recalling like this to her mind, she did not obtain pleasure in her mind.

21-25. Lalitā, along with her husband, moved into a dense forest. That demon who took any form he liked, was cruel, was engaged in (committing) sins, who was deformed, ate human beings, wandered in that impassable forest. He, oppressed by sins, did not have pleasure at night or by day. Seeing her husband like that Lalitā was very much pained. She, weeping, wandered with him in (that) dense forest. Having seen a lovely hermitage and a sage of a tranquil form, she quickly went to him, and saluting him, stood before him. Seeing her distressed, the sage, solely devoted to kindness, said to her: "Who are you? Why have you come here? Tell the truth to me."

Lalitā said:

26-28. There is a gandharva Vīradhanvan (by name). I am the daughter of that noble one. Know me to be Lalitā by name. I have come here for the sake of my husband. O great sage, due to a sin, my husband has become a demon of a fierce form and wicked deeds. Seeing him, I am not happy. Now, O brāhmaṇa, instruct me. O lord, tell me what I should do. (Tell me about) the religious merit due to which he is free from his state of demon, O best brāhmaṇa.

The sage said:

29-31. O you beautiful woman, it is now the bright half of the month of Caitra. O Lalitā, (in it falls) the Kāmadā Ekādaśī which is great and which destroys sins. O auspicious one, duly observe its vow as told by me. Give the religious merit which (you will obtain) from this vow to your husband. When the religious merit is given (to him), his sin will go away in a moment.

Hearing these words of the sage, Lalitā was delighted.

32-39. Having fasted on the Ekādaśī, so also on the day of Dvādaśī, Lalitā, in the vicinity of a brāhmaṇa, and in front of Viṣṇu, uttered these words for the emancipation of her husband: "I have observed the vow, viz. the Kāmadā fast. Let his goblinhood go (away) by the prowess of that religious merit." Merely at the words of Lalitā, just at that moment, his sins went away, and he had a divine form. His state of a demon went (away) and he got gandharvahood again. Full of gold and jewels, he rejoiced with Lalitā. The couple having more lovely forms than before got into an excellent aeroplane, and looked more charming due to the efficacy of Kāmadā. O best king, realising this, this (Kāmadā-vow) should be carefully observed. For the good of the people I told it to you. It destroys sins like that of the condition of a goblin. There is nothing superior to it in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. O king, by reciting about it, and listening to the (the account of) it one would get the fruit of a Vājapeya sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

Varūthinī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be the name of the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Vaiśākha? Tell me (its) importance. Salutation to you, O Vāsudeva.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-15. O king, this Ekādaśī named Varūthinī, (falling) in the dark half of Vaiśākha, gives grandeur in this and the next world. Due to the Varūthinī-vow happiness always results; and the sins are destroyed, and good fortune is obtained. An unfortunate woman who observes this (vow) obtains good fortune. This gives pleasures and salvation to all the people. It removes all the sins of people, and cuts off living as an embryo (i.e. puts an end to rebirth). Due to the Varūthinī-vow only

Māndhātṛ went to heaven. So also many other kings like Dhundhumāra (went to heaven). Lord Śiva became free from the sin of (breaking) the skull of Brahmā. One who observes the vow of Varūthinī gets the fruit equal to that (obtained by him) who gives a bhāra of gold on Kurukṣetra when the Sun (is auspicious). That man with faith who observes the vow of Varūthinī, gets (his) desired (objects) in this world and the next (world). O best king, to those who observe it, it is pure, purifying; it destroys great sins. It gives them pleasures and salvation. O king, giving of elephants is superior to giving of horses. Giving of land (is superior) to giving of elephants. Gift of sesamum-seeds is superior (even) to that. Giving of gold is superior to that, and giving of food is superior to that (i.e. giving of gold). There was not nor there will be a greater gift than that of food. By means of food the manes, gods and men are satisfied. O best king, giving one's daughter (in marriage) is said by the wise to be like that. The lord himself said that giving of a cow is equal to that. Of all the gifts that have been mentioned, giving knowledge is the best. A man, by observing the Varūthinī(-vow) gets a fruit equal to that. Those men who, deluded by sin, subsist on the money (got) for (giving their) daughter (in marriage), lose their religious merit, and go to hell full of torments. Therefore, with all care money for giving a daughter in marriage should not be taken (i.e. should be avoided).

16-25. O lord of kings, he who through greed takes money for offering his daughter in marriage, certainly becomes (i.e. is born as) a cat in the next existence. O king, even Citragupta cannot measure the religious merit of him who, with his religious merit, gives, according to his capacity, his daughter well-adorned (in marriage). A man gets fruit equal to that by observing the Varūthinī(-vow). Bell-metal, flesh, masūra (a kind of pulse), thick peas, kodrava (a species of grain eaten by the poor), vegetables, honey, eatables of (i.e. offered by) others, and food and sexual union—these ten a devotee of Viṣṇu should avoid on the tenth day. Playing with dice, sport, sleep, tāmbūla, cleaning the teeth, censuring others, wickedness, theft, harming (others) and indulging in sex, anger, telling lies—(these) he should avoid on the Ekādaśī. Bell-metal, flesh, liquor, honey, oil, talking to those who are fallen, exercise, journey and food

and sexual union, (mounting on) a bull's back, food prepared with masūra—he should avoid on Dvādaśī. O king, to those who have observed the Varūthinī(-vow) in this manner, it would, after destroying all their sins, give them an undecaying position in the end. Those who, having kept awake at night, have worshipped Viṣṇu, are freed from all sins and reach the highest position. Therefore, those who are afraid of sins, should observe it with all efforts. A man afraid of (Saturn) the son of enemy of the night, should observe the Varūthinī(-vow). O king, by reciting (about) it and by listening to (the account of) it, a man would obtain the fruit of (the gift of) a thousand cows. Being free from all sins, he is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

Mohinī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Of which name would be the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Vaiśākha? What is its fruit? What is the manner of (observing) it? Tell it, O Viṣṇu.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O lord of kings, the same as you are asking me (now) was formerly asked by the intelligent Rāma from Vasiṣṭha.

Rāma said:

3-4. O glorious one, I desire to hear about the best among the vows, which destroys all sins, and which cuts off all miseries. I have experienced sorrows (like the ones) due to separation from Sītā. So I am scared. (Therefore), O great sage, I am asking you.

Vasiṣṭha said:

5-10. O Rāma, you have asked well. This is (due to) your devoted mind. Merely by uttering your name a man is purified.

Yet, with a desire for the well-being of the people, I shall tell you (about) the excellent vow, (most) pure of the purifying vows. O Rāma, the Ekādaśī (that) would fall in the bright half of Vaiśākha, is called Mohinī. It is great and removes all sins. Due to the prowess of the vow of this (Ekādaśī men) are freed from the noose of delusion and the multitude of sins. I am telling you the truth and the truth (only). Therefore, O Rāma, this one, that destroys sins and puts an end to great misery should be observed by (people) like you. O Rāma, listen attentively to the great, sin-removing story, merely by hearing which (even) a great sin perishes.

11-20. On the lovely bank of Sarasvatī there was an auspicious city Bhadrāvatī. A king named Dyutimat ruled there. He was born in the Lunar family. He was courageous and was true to his word. A vaiśya prosperous with wealth and grains lived there. He was known as Dhanapāla. He prompted auspicious deeds. He constructed public water places, wells, temples, gardens, tanks and houses. He was engrossed in devotion for Viṣṇu and was calm. He had five sons: Sumanas, Dyutimat, Medhāvin and Sukṛta. The fifth Dhṛṣṭabuddhi was alway engaged in (committing) great sins. He was attached to the union with others' wives, and was well-versed in stories about voluptuous people. He was attached to addictions like gambling, and ardently longed for (the company of) others' wives. He did not intend to worship deities, nor the dead ancestors, nor brāhmaṇas. The wicked one lived (by doing) injustice, and wasted the money of his father. He ate what was prohibited and was always attached to drinking liquor. The wicked one threw his arms round the neck of a prostitute and wandered over the crossway. He was expelled from the house by his father and was also forsaken by his kinsmen. He even exhausted the money, ornaments on his body. He was abandoned by the harlots and was condemned (by them) due to the loss of his wealth. Then he was disturbed in mind, was without clothes, and was oppressed by hunger. "What should I do? Where should I go? By what means shall I subsist?" (Thus he thought.)

21-29. Just in his father's city he started stealing. He was arrested by the royal officers, but was released due to the importance of his father. Being zealous, they bound him, again

released him and again bound him. The wicked Dhṛṣṭabuddhi was bound with strong fetters. He was repeatedly whipped and tormented. "O dull-witted one, you should not live within the range (i.e. limits) of my kingdom." Saying so, he was freed by the king from the strong fetters. Due to his fear he went out (of the city) to a dense forest. Being oppressed by hunger and thirst he ran here and there. Like a lion he killed deer, pigs and spotted (deer). Addicted to eating flesh, he always lived in the forest. Taking a bow in his hand, and putting the quiver on his back, he, going on foot, killed the birds moving in the forest. That blinded, cruel Dhṛṣṭabuddhi killed these—partridges, peacocks, francolins, and rats—and other (birds). He plunged into the mud of sins due to sins committed in his former existence. He was overcome with pain and sorrow. He was annoyed day and night. Due to his acquisition of some religious merit he reached the hermitage of Kauṇḍinya.

30-32. Dhṛṣṭabuddhi, oppressed with the burden of grief, approached the ascetic who had bathed in Gaṅgā in the month of Vaiśākha. Due to a slight contact of his garment his sins vanished and his misfortune was destroyed. Standing in front of Kauṇḍinya, he, with the palms of his hands joined, said to him:

Dhṛṣṭabuddhi said:

O brāhmaṇa, O greatest of the brāhmaṇas, taking compassion on me, tell me that religious merit due to the powers of which salvation takes place.

Kauṇḍinya said:

33-39. Listen attentively to that by which your sins will perish. In the dark half of Vaiśākha falls the well-known (Ekādaśī) named Mohinī. Prompted by my words, observe the vow of that Ekādaśī. When men observe a fast on this Mohinī (Ekādaśī), their sins comparable to Meru and earned (i.e. committed) in many existences perish.

Hearing these words of the sage, Dhṛṣṭabuddhi, pleased in his mind, observed duly the vow according to the advice of Kauṇḍinya. O best among kings, when he observed (this) vow, his sins vanished. Then, he, having a divine body and mounted

upon Garuḍa, went to Viṣṇu's world which is free from all calamities. O Rāmacandra, the Mohinī-vow is excellent in this way. In three worlds with the mobile and the immobile, there is nothing greater than it. Sacrifices and the like, so also (visits to) holy places, gifts are not equal even to the sixteenth part of (the religious merit) it (gives). By reciting (about) it and listening to (its account) a man would obtain the fruit of (the gift of) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FIFTY

Aparā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Jyeṣṭha? I desire to hear (about its) importance. O Janārdana, (please) tell it.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10. O king, you have, with the desire of the well-being of the people, asked well. (That Ekādaśī) is Aparā by name, O lord of kings. It gives unending fruit. He who observes the (vow of) Aparā becomes famous in the world. O king, he who is overcome by (the sin of) killing a brāhmaṇa, who kills (the members of) his family, who has procured an abortion, who censures others, who is interested in others' wives, certainly becomes free from sin on observing the (vow of) Aparā. These, viz. one who gives false testimony, who uses false measures or false weights, who would study false (i.e. unauthoritative) Vedas, so also false sacred texts, so also one who is a fraudulent astrologer, who is a fraudulent physician, and one who is connected with false testimony are the residents of hell. O king, by observing the (vow) of Aparā, they are free from sins. A kṣatriya who giving up the duty of a kṣatriya, flees from the battle, goes, being expelled from his caste, to a fierce hell. He too, by observing the (vow of) Aparā, would, after shedding his sin, go to heaven. A

learned disciple who censures his preceptor, having incurred great sins, goes to a fearful hell. That man also by observing the (vow of) Aparā would obtain good position (i.e. beatitude).

11-20. O king, listen to the greatness of Aparā. I am (now) telling it. A fruit similar to that which men obtain (by bathing) at Prayāga in Māgha, when the Sun is in Makara (i.e. the sign Capricornus of Zodiac), or that religious merit which is obtained (by a man) after bathing at Kāśī on an eclipse-day, or the fruit which a man who offers piṇḍas to his dead ancestors at Gayā, gets, or which a man who bathes in the Gautamī (river) when Jupiter is in Siṁha (i.e. the sign Leo of the Zodiac) gets, or the fruit which a man gets on bathing in Kṛṣṇaveṇī when Jupiter is in Kanyā (i.e. the sign Virgo of the Zodiac), or the fruit a man gets on seeing Kumbhakedāra, or in the pilgrimage to Badaryāśrama and visiting holy places during it, or the fruit which a man obtains (by bathing) at Kurukṣetra when the planet Sun (is auspicious), or the fruit that a man gets by performing a sacrifice with (the giving of) presents and gifts of elephants, horses or gold, is obtained by observing the (vow of) Aparā. So also a man obtains that fruit by the Aparā-vow which he gets by giving (to a brāhmaṇa) a recently calved cow, gold, or (a piece of) land. This (vow) is an axe (cutting) the tree in the form of sins, and is a wild fire to the fuel in the form of sins. It is the Sun (dispelling) the darkness of sins. It is a lion (killing) the spotted deer of sins. Those who are without (i.e. who do not observe) the vow of (this) Ekādaśī, are born to die like bubbles in water or like ants among creatures. A man, having fasted on the Aparā (Ekādaśī day) and having worshipped Viṣṇu, is free from all sins and is honoured in Viṣṇu's world. I have told (this vow) to you with the desire of the well-being of the people. O king, a man reciting (about) it and listening (to its account), would obtain the fruit of (gift of) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

Nirjalā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Janārdana, I have heard the full importance of Aparā. O you who show respect (to others), tell me about that (Ekādaśī) which would fall (i.e. falls) in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. Satyavatī's pious son, Vyāsa, who knows the essence of all sacred texts and who has mastered the Vedas and the Upaniṣads will tell (you about) it.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

3. I have heard the duties as told by Manu, so also as told by Vasiṣṭha. O Dvaipāyana, you please tell properly the duties of Viṣṇu's devotees.

Śrī Vedavyāsa said:

4-9. O lord of men, you have listened to the duties as told by Manu, so also as told by Vasiṣṭha. They cannot be practised in Kaliyuga. O you very intelligent one, (the Ekādaśī vow) is the essence of (i.e. of what is told in) the Purāṇas, is an easy means, requires little money, little effort, (but) gives great fruit. One should not eat on the Ekādaśī-days of both the fortnights (of a month). On the Dvādaśī day, being pure, having worshipped Viṣṇu, having honoured (a brāhmaṇa), one should then eat with a brāhmaṇa. O king, one should not eat during the impurity caused by a birth or a death in the family. O best of men, those who desire to go to heaven should practise this vow as long as they live. There is no doubt about this. Even those who are sinners, who are of a wicked conduct, who are most sinful, who are bereft of piety, go to my proximity (i.e. reach me) if they do not eat on Ekādaśī.

10. Having heard these words of him, the mighty-armed Bhīma trembled like an aśvattha-leaf, and saluting his preceptor, said to him:

Bhīmasena said:

11-14. O grandsire, O you very intelligent one, listen to my important words. Yudhiṣṭhira and Kuntī, so also Draupadī and Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, who practise (this) good vow, never eat on the day of Ekādaśī. They always tell me, "O Bhīma, do not eat (on the Ekādaśī day)." I told them: "For me hunger is difficult to bear. I shall duly give gifts. I shall worship Viṣṇu."

Hearing the words of Bhīmasena, Vyāsa said (these) words:

Vyāsa said:

15. If you desire (to go to) heaven, and if (you think) hell is painful, then you should not eat on the Ekādaśī of both the fortnights.

Bhīmasena said:

16-18. O grandsire, O you very intelligent one, I shall tell in front of (i.e. to) you. I am not able (to go on) by eating (even) once a day. Then O lord, how can I (put up with) a fast? That fire, called Vṛka, which is always present in my belly, is extinguished only when I eat many times. O great sage, I am not able to observe a (single) fast. I shall properly observe that due to which heaven is reached. Therefore, having decided about one, tell me that by (observing) which I shall obtain heaven.

Vyāsa said:

19-26. When the Ekādaśī would fall on (the day when the Sun) is in the second or the third sign of the Zodiac in the month of Jyeṣṭha, a wise man should carefully observe (the Ekādaśī fast) without (even drinking) water. He should avoid even sipping a mouthful of water and should not eat (at all). Otherwise the vow would be broken. Listen, when a man (lives even) by avoiding water from the sunrise of a day to the sunrise (of the next day), he obtains the fruit of twelve Dvādaśīs. Then in the auspicious morning of the Dvādaśī day he should bathe, and having duly given water, gold etc. to brāhmaṇas, he, being contended and controlled, should eat along with brāhmaṇas. O

Bhīmasena, listen to the religious merit (which is obtained) by doing like this. There is no doubt that he hereby obtains the fruit of the Ekādaśīs that fall during the year. Keśava, the holder of a conch, a disc and a mace told me like this: "Leaving all others a man should seek my refuge only." A man, not eating on an Ekādaśī day is freed from sins. In the Kali-age, there is no purity of objects. Rites (or ceremonies) are based on the Smṛtis.

27-33a. How can there be a rite based on the Vedas, when the wicked Kali-age has arrived? O son of Vāyu (i.e. Bhīma), what is the use of telling you much again and again? A man should not eat on the Ekādaśī of both the fortnights. Listen, O Bhīma, to the auspicious fruit that (a man) obtains by remaining without water on the Ekādaśī day of the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha. O Bhīma, if fasts are observed on all the auspicious Ekādaśī days that are said to fall during the year and in the bright or dark fortnights (of each month), they give wealth and grains, give sons, good health and auspicious (things). O king, there is no doubt about it. I am telling you the truth. The big-bodied, fierce, dark-formed, fearful messengers of Yama, who hold staffs and nooses, do not approach that man. (But) Viṣṇu's messengers who have put on yellow garments, who are gentle, who have held discs in their hands, whose speed is like that of the mind, take him on his death to Viṣṇu's city.

33b-41. Therefore, with all efforts a man should observe the Ekādaśī-fast without (drinking even) water. Then having given he is freed from all sins. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, on this day observe a fast and worship Viṣṇu with all efforts for the destruction of your sins. "Even by means of passion as much as the size of the point of an arrow, I have not sinned even in a dream. O lord of gods, I shall eat food on the next day of the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu." Uttering this hymn he should engage himself in (observing) the fast of Ekādaśī after being endowed with faith and restraint for the destruction of all his sins. By the power of Ekādaśī all the sin of the size of the Meru and Mandara mountains, which a man has committed, is reduced to ash. O king, those who are not able to give should give a pitcher containing gold along with garments.

He who, on this day, observes the vow of (not drinking even) water, is meritorious. The fruit of the gift of gold is said to be a crorefold in every watch. All that (like) a bath, a gift, muttering of prayers, a sacrifice that is given (or performed) by a man, becomes unending. This is told by Kṛṣṇa himself. What is the use of any other religious rite than the Ekādaśī observed without (drinking) water?

42-52. Having properly observed it with due rites, a man would obtain Viṣṇu's position. All that like gold, food, garments, which are given by a man on this day, would, O king, be inexhaustible. He who eats food on the Ekādaśī day eats sin. In this world he becomes a cāṇḍāla and after death gets a miserable position. Those who, having fasted, will give gifts on the Dvādaśī day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha, obtain the highest position. Those like the killer of a brāhmaṇa, a drunkard, a thief, a hater of his preceptor or one who always tells lies, who fast without (even drinking) water, are freed from all sins. O son of Kuntī, listen to the special gift which is to be given on the Ekādaśī day, on which not (even) water (is to be drunk) by men and women endowed with faith. He who lies in water should be worshipped and a watery cow should be given (to a brāhmaṇa). An actual cow should be given or of ghee. O best among the righteous, brāhmaṇas should be carefully pleased by means of big presents and with various kinds of sweet food. The brāhmaṇas are pleased, and when they are pleased, Viṣṇu gives salvation. Those who have not fasted on this day have wronged themselves. They—the sinners, and of a bad conduct—have been undoubtedly plundered. Those who, being calm, controlled, devoted to (giving) gifts, worshipped Viṣṇu, and keeping awake, fasted on this day, have taken along with themselves a hundred (members) past and future (of) their families to the abode of Viṣṇu.

53-58. On this day on (which even) water (should) not (be drunk) food, garments, so also cows, water, a good bed and a good seat, a water-pot used by an ascetic, so also an umbrella should be given (to a brāhmaṇa). He who gives a pair of shoes to the best brāhmaṇa—a worthy recipient—is honoured in heaven (after being taken there) by (i.e. in) a golden aeroplane. He who would listen to (the account of) this with devotion, and

he who would narrate it, both go to heaven. No doubt should be raised about this. That fruit which a man obtains by offering a śrāddha at Kurukṣetra when the Sun is eclipsed by Rāhu, is obtained even by listening to (the account of) this. After cleaning his teeth, he should have the restriction: 'On the day of the Ekādaśī, to please Viṣṇu, I shall, remaining without food, avoid water except for sipping.' Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, should be worshipped on Dvādaśī.

59-64. Having duly worshipped (Viṣṇu) with sandal, incenses, flowers, so also pleasing garments, he should recite this hymn: "O god of gods, O Hṛṣīkeśa, O you who emancipate (beings) from the ocean of the mundane existence, take me to the highest position due to (my offering) the pitcher of water." O Bhīma, on that auspicious Ekādaśī which falls in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, a man should fast without (even) drinking water, by giving water pitchers with sugar to the best brāhmaṇas. (Due to this) he rejoices with Viṣṇu. Then he should devoutly give pitchers to brāhmaṇas. Having then fed the brāhmaṇas, he should take food with devotion to them. He who thus observes the full Dvādaśī, removing sins, is free from all sins and goes to the good position (of Viṣṇu).

Since then Bhīma observed (a fast on) this Ekādaśī day. In the world the Dvādaśī came to be known as Pāṇḍava-Dvādaśī.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

Yoginī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is the name of) the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Āṣāḍha? Please favour and tell it to me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10. O king, I shall tell you the best of the vows, which destroys all sins and gives full salvation. In the dark half of

Āṣāḍha (falls) the Ekādaśī called Yoginī. O best king, it destroys great sins. (This) Yoginī is an ancient boat for those plunged into the ocean of the worldly existence and for (the good of) those observing the vow of Yoginī which has become the essence in the three worlds. I shall tell an old, auspicious tale. In Alakā (lived) Kubera solely devoted to Śiva. He had a flower-collector called Hemamālin. His beautiful wife was Viśālākṣī by name. With his mind attached to her and being under the sway of Cupid's noose, he, after having brought a heap of flowers from the Mānasa (lake) stayed at home. Being attached to his wife through love, he did not go to Kubera's house. In the temple of god Kubera was worshipping Śiva. O king, at mid-day he was waiting for the flowers. Hemamālin enjoyed with his wife in his house. The king of yakṣas, angry due to the delay, then said: "O yakṣas, why is the wicked-minded Hemamālin not coming (yet)? Ascertain about (i.e. the whereabouts of) him." Thus he spoke repeatedly.

The yakṣas said:

11-14a. O king, lustful for his wife, he rejoices in his house as he pleases.

Hearing their words Kubera was filled with anger. He quickly called that attendant, Hemamālin. He too having realized the delay, with his eyes full of fear, came there even without bathing, and stood in front of him. Seeing him Kubera was angry, and his eyes were reddish due to anger. Full of anger and with his lips trembling through anger, he said:

Kubera said:

14b-22. O sinner, O you of a wicked conduct, you have condemned the god (Śiva). O meanest among the attendants, you, separated from your wife, and suffering from eighteen kinds of leprosy, disappear from this place, and go away.

When these words were uttered by him, he fell from that place and overcome with great grief, his body suffered from leprosy. By day he did not get happiness, nor did he have sleep at night. In the shadow his body was extremely tormented, and

he was oppressed in the summer. Due to the efficacy of Śiva's worship his memory was not lost. Though overpowered by sin, he remembered his old deeds. (Then) wandering from there he went to Himālaya, the excellent mountain. There he saw the ascetic Mārkaṇḍeya, the excellent sage. His age was equal to that of Brahmā. The sinner saluted his feet from a distance. The best sage Mārkaṇḍeya, having seen him trembling like that, called him to oblige him, and said these words to him: "Why (i.e. due to what) are you overcome with leprosy? Why are you so much condemned?" Thus addressed, he replied to Mārkaṇḍeya, the great sage:

Hemamālin said:

23-27. I am Kubera's attendant, Hemamālin by name. O sage, everyday I fetched a collection of lotuses and offered it to Kubera at the time of his worshipping Śiva; and one day I, with my mind attached to the pleasure (derived) from my wife and with my mind distressed with grief, was not conscious of the time. Therefore, O sage, I was cursed by the angry Kubera. I am overcome with leprosy, and am separated from my wife. Due to my auspicious deeds, I have now come to you, knowing that the heart of the good is naturally capable of obliging others. O best sage, advise me, a sinner.

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

28-34. Since you told the truth here and did not tell a lie, therefore, I am, instructing you in an auspicious vow. Observe the Yoginī-vow in the dark half of Āṣāḍha. Due to the religious merit of this vow, your leprosy will certainly disappear.

Hearing these words of the sage, he fell (i.e. prostrated himself) like a staff on the ground. Being lifted up by the sage, he became extremely delighted. By the advice of Mārkaṇḍeya he observed the vow, with the result that the eighteen kinds of leprosy of him (i.e. from which he was suffering) disappeared completely. When by the sage's words he observed the vow, he became happy. O king, the vow of Yoginī is said to be like this. A man who observes the Yoginī-vow obtains the fruit equal to that which a man who would feed eightyeight

thousand brāhmaṇas obtains. (The vow) removes great sins; it gives the fruit of great religious merit. By reciting and listening to this account a man is free from all sins.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

Devaśayanī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Which would be (i.e. is) the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha? What is the name and the manner of it? (i.e. in which manner is it observed?) Tell me about it in detail.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-8. I shall tell you (about that Ekādaśī) named Śayanī which is very auspicious, which gives heaven and salvation, which is great and which removes all sins, merely hearing about which a man would obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya (sacrifice). I have told (you) the truth and the truth (only). Nothing is greater than this for men. O lord of kings, the best one is created by the Creator for the destruction of the sins of sinners. There is no greater (vow) than this which would give salvation. Listen, O king, for this reason that the best position would be obtained by men, the listeners, even by listening to it. Those are the Vaiṣṇavas (i.e. Viṣṇu's devotees) who are greatly devoted to me. In Āṣāḍha, the great god Vāmana (i.e. Viṣṇu) is worshipped. He who has worshipped with lotuses the lotus-eyed Vāmana in the bright half of Āṣāḍha on the day of Kāmikā, has honoured the entire world and has worshipped the three ancient gods (viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva); so also, he who has observed the Ekādaśī—the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu—has honoured the entire world and worshipped the three ancient gods.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

9-10. O Viṣṇu, I have a great doubt here. (Please) listen. How do you sleep (in the ocean)? How have you resorted to

Bali? What do the other people do? Why do they sleep on the ground, O very intelligent one, tell (i.e. explain) this. I have a great doubt.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

11-16. O best king, listen to the great account which removes sins, (and) by merely hearing which all sins would perish. O king, formerly in the Tretā age there was a demon named Bali. Greatly devoted to me he worshipped me everyday. With various sacrifices the demon worshipped me, the ancient one. O king, with great devotion he performed sacrifices and observed vows. Then having deliberated in many ways with Indra, Bṛahaspati and (other) deities, I though worshipped with hymns (by Bali) in various ways, conquered the demons with my Vāmana-form in my fifth incarnation, with (i.e. after taking up) a very fierce form of the nature of (i.e. pervading) the entire universe by prevarication. (Bali, however,) remained firm resorting to truth only. Śukra warded him off saying, 'This is Viṣṇu'.

17-26. O king, I begged for land measured by my three steps and a half. When he offered the water just for conveying his intention, O king, listen, I took up a form like this: I put my feet in the 'Bhūr' world, and I put knees in the 'Bhuvas' world. I put my waist in the 'Svar' world, and belly in the 'Mahas' world. I put my heart in the 'Jana' world, and my neck in 'Tapas' world. I put my face in the 'Satya' world, and head above it. The planets like the Moon, the Sun, so also the constellations, so also gods with Indra, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas and kinnaras praised (me) with various hymns from the Vedas. Seizing Bali by his hand, I occupied the earth in three steps. Then I placed half the step on his head. O king, the demon, my worshipper, went to the lower world. I threw down the demon. What else did I do after it? He was bent with modesty, Viṣṇu was very much pleased. Kāmikā in the bright half of Āṣāḍha is Viṣṇu's day. On that day one of my forms remains resorting to Bali. Another (form) lies on the back of Śeṣa in the ocean, O great king, till the coming (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika. Till then he would be very religious and devoted to best of all duties.

27-37. A man who observes the vow goes to the best position. For this reason, O king, it should be carefully observed.

There is no other (Ekādaśī) than this which is pure and which destroys sins. On that day on which the lord of gods holding a conch, a disc, and a mace sleeps, a man should worship the god holding a conch, a disc, and a mace, and he should especially, with devotion, keep awake at night. (Even) Brahmā is not able to measure the religious merit of (i.e. due to) it. O king, he who, in this way, observes this best vow of Ekādaśī, which removes all sins, gives pleasures and salvation, even though a cāṇḍāla, always lives in my heaven doing what is dear to me. Those men who pass the four months (from the eleventh of the bright half of Āṣāḍha to the eleventh of the bright half of Kārtika) by offering lights, and with the vow of eating on a palāśa-leaf, are dear to me. When Viṣṇu is lying (on Śeṣa), a man should sleep on the ground. He should avoid vegetables in Śrāvaṇa, and curd in Bhādrapada. He should avoid milk in Āśvina, and give up two-leafed (grains) in Kārtika. Or remaining in celibacy, he would reach the highest position. O king, due to the Ekādaśī-vow a man is freed from sins. It should always be observed. It should never be forgotten. That Ekādaśī falling in the dark half between Śayaṇī and Prabodhinī should be observed by a householder; never any other. O king, a man should listen to the great account which removes sins. He (thereby) obtains the fruit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

Kāmikā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What is the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Śrāvaṇa? Tell that to us, O Govinda, salutation to you.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, listen. I shall narrate to you the account that removes sins and which formerly Brahmā told to Nārada who asked (him about it).

Nārada said:

3-4. O lotus-seated lord, I desire to hear from you, what would be (i.e. is) the name of Ekādaśī in the dark half of Śrāvaṇa. Who is its (presiding) deity? What is the manner (in which it is to be observed)? What is its religious merit. O lord tell (this).

Hearing these words of him Brahmā spoke (the following) words:

Brahmā said:

5-7. O Nārada, listen. With the desire for the good of the people, I shall tell you about the Ekādaśī named Kāmikā (which falls) in the dark half of Śrāvaṇa. Merely by hearing about it, one would obtain the fruit of (having performed) a Vājapeya sacrifice. Listen to the fruit which a man who worships the lord of gods holding a conch, a disc, and a mace, gets. Listen to the meritorious fruit of him (i.e. which he gets) who would worship or who meditates upon Hari, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, called Śrī Hari.

8-18. He does not obtain that fruit (by bathing) in Gaṅgā, at Kāśī, Naimiṣa or Puṣkara, which he gets by worshipping Kṛṣṇa on that day. He obtains that fruit by worshipping Kṛṣṇa, which he obtains (by bathing) at the time of a portent foreboding a great calamity, when Jupiter is in the Leo sign, in Godāvarī or Daṇḍaka. Both, he who gives the earth along with the oceans and he who observes the Kāmikā-vow, are said to get the same fruit. The man who observes the Kāmikā-vow obtains the fruit which he who would give a milch cow along with articles of household use, gets. The excellent man who would worship god Viṣṇu in Śrāvaṇa, has worshipped gods with gandharvas, uragas and pannagas. Therefore, sin-fearing men should, with all efforts, and according to their capacity, worship Viṣṇu on the Kāmikā day. The Kāmikā-vow is best for the emancipation of those who are plunged in the ocean of the worldly existence, full of the mud of sins. There is no other (vow) than this (so) pure and sin-removing. O Nārada, know it to be like this. Viṣṇu himself has said (so). Know that the fruit of (i.e. got by) the

observers of Kāmikā-vow is much superior to the fruit obtained by those devoted to the knowledge of the supreme spirit. The man who, after having kept awake at night, observes the Kāmikā-vow, does not see the fearful Yama, or does not face a calamity. He does not see (i.e. is not born in) a bad stock due to his observing the Kāmikā-vow. The meditating saints have reached final emancipation after observing the Kāmikā-vow.

19-29. Therefore, with all efforts it should be observed by those who have controlled themselves. The man who would worship Viṣṇu with Tulasī-leaves is not tinged with sin, as a lotus-leaf with water. He obtains that fruit by worshipping Viṣṇu with a Tulasī-leaf, which he obtains by giving a bhāra of gold or fourfold silver of it. Worshipped with gems, pearls, lapis lazuli, corals etc. Viṣṇu is not so pleased as he is with Tulasī-leaves. The sin of him, (right) from his birth, who has worshipped Viṣṇu with Tulasī-sprouts certainly perishes. Salutation to Tulasī which, when seen, destroys the entire heap of sins, which, when touched, purifies the body, which, when saluted, removes diseases, which, when sprinkled over, frightens Yama, which, when planted, brings about the vicinity of lord Kṛṣṇa, and which, when placed at his feet, gives salvation instantly. Citragupta is not able to know the measure of the religious merit of the man who gives (i.e. keeps) a light day and night on the day of Viṣṇu (i.e. on the day sacred to Viṣṇu). The dead ancestors of him whose lamp burns in front of Viṣṇu, remain in heaven and are gratified with nectar. Having burnt a lamp with ghee or sesamum oil, he, being honoured with a hundred crores of lamps, goes to the Sun's world. I have told you this importance of Kāmikā. Men should, therefore, observe it which removes all sins, which removes (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, which removes (the sin of) causing abortion. It gives (them) the abode of Viṣṇu, and gives the fruit of great religious merit. A man endowed with faith, on hearing about the greatness of this, obtains (i.e. goes to) Viṣṇu's world, and is free from all sins.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

Putradā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī (falling) in the bright half of Śrāvaṇa? O Madhusūdana, please favour me and tell it to me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-9. O king, listen attentively to this great sin-removing account, by hearing which the fruit would be that of a Vājapeya. At the beginning of Dvāpara age formerly in the city of Māhiṣmatī a king named Mahījit ruled over his kingdom. The kingdom did not give happiness to him who was sonless. A sonless man does not have happiness in this world or in the next. He passed a long time in the thought of (i.e. expecting) a son. But the king did not have son giving all happiness to men. Noticing himself to be advanced in age the king became anxious. Then being in the assembly among his subjects he said these words: "O people, in this (my) life I have not committed a sin. I have not put into my treasury money that is unjustly earned. I have never taken away a brāhmaṇa's wealth, nor the wealth of a deity. I have never taken away another's deposit, which (act) causes great sin; I have looked after the people like my own sons, and I have conquered the land righteously. I have inflicted punishment on the wicked, even though they were like my brother or son. The eminent persons were always honoured by me and I have not hated people.

10-17. O best brāhmaṇas, think over as to why a son is not born in the house of me who am thus talking about a righteous path.

Hearing these words the brāhmaṇas along with the subjects and the family-priest held consultation and went to a dense forest. Here and there they saw hermitages resorted to by sages. Desiring the well-being of the king, they saw the best sage Lomaśa who was guileless, who was (all) alone practising a severe penance, who was ancient, who did not eat food, who had con-

quered his soul, and who had controlled his anger, who knew the truth about righteousness, who was proficient in all sacred texts, who had (lived) a long life, who was magnanimous, who had hair, and who resembled Brahmā. As each kalpa passed, one of his hair withered. Therefore, this great sage who was omniscient, was named Lomaśa. Seeing him all were glad and came near him. They saluted him according to decorum, as he deserved and as laid down (in the sacred texts). Bowing with modesty, they said to one another: "Due to our good fortune only we have come across this best sage." Seeing them bowing like that, the best sage said:

Lomaśa said:

18-19. Why have you come here? Tell it to me with the reason. Why were you delighted on seeing me and why are you praising me? I shall certainly do what would be beneficial to you. There is no doubt that the existence of (people) like me is for obliging others.

The people said:

20-25. Listen. We shall tell the reason of our arrival. We have come to you to get our doubt removed. There is none greater than Brahmā except you. Therefore, for some work we have approached you. This king Mahījit by name is at present sonless. O brāhmaṇa, we are his subjects, looked after by him like his own sons. Seeing him sonless, and distressed by his grief, we have, entertaining a firm thought, come here to practise penance. O sage, give instruction as to how the king would have a son.

Hearing these words of them, he remained in meditation for some time. Knowing his former birth, the sage replied:

Lomaśa said:

26-30. In the previous existence he was a poor vaiśya, and doing evil deeds and engaged in trade he roamed from village to village. On the tenth day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, when the Sun had reached the centre of the sky (he saw) a pond on the border of a village. Seeing the well (pond?) containing water

he decided to drink water. At once there came a cow with her calf. Being oppressed by thirst and by heat, she drank water. Preventing her who was drinking water, he himself drank it. Due to that sinful act the king became sonless. Due to the religious merit of some (former) existence he obtained the kingdom free from nuisance.

The people said:

31. It is heard in (i.e. learnt from) the Purāṇa that sin perishes due to religious merit. Advise about the religious merit due to which the sin would perish, and by your grace the king would have a son.

Lomaśa said:

32-44. O men, observe the Ekādaśī which (falls in) the bright half of Śrāvaṇa, is called Putradā, and gives desired objects.

Hearing this, and saluting the sage, they went (back) to the city and observed that vow duly, justly and by keeping awake. The people gave its very pure religious merit to the king. When the religious merit was given, the queen had conception. When the time of delivery arrived, she gave birth to a bright son. A pavitraka (a ring) was fashioned in honour of Vāsudeva on the twelfth day of the bright half of Śrāvaṇa when the Sun was in Cancer. (The pavitraka was fashioned with) gold, silver, copper, silken threads or silken cloth and lotuses, kuśa, kāśa, or with cotton cut by a brāhmaṇa woman. Having bathed he should purify the thread of three strands. On the previous day, at the time separated by the times of milking the cow, preliminary consecration (should be done). Having saluted the brāhmaṇas and the feet of the preceptor, he should keep awake with the auspicious sounds of songs. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, bhillas, so also śūdras,—all following their own practices, should devoutly fashion the pavitraka. Then he should duly give it to his preceptor. He should also honour the brāhmaṇas—Viṣṇu's devotees—with sandal and flowers. A brāhmaṇa should offer it to Viṣṇu with the hymn: *Ato devā.* A śūdra should do so with the root-hymns to Śiva as to Viṣṇu. Every year men should fashion

pavitrakas. So also those who desire pleasures and salvation in the mundane existence which is an ocean of grief. He who does not fashion the pavitraka according to the rule, has his worship —i.e. the worship of Viṣṇu's devotee—(rendered) fruitless. Hearing the importance of this (vow) a man is free from sins. Having obtained in this world the pleasure from his son, he would go to heaven after death.

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

Ajā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Janārdana, I desire to hear what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Bhādrapada. (Please) tell it.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-11. O king, listen attentively. I shall tell (you) in detail. This Ekādaśī is called Ajā and it destroys all sins. The sins of him who on this day observes this vow after worshipping Viṣṇu, perish; (so also they perish) even by listening to the vow. O king, there is nothing greater than this, beneficial for both the worlds. I have told you the truth. My words are not false. Formerly there was a king known as Hariścandra. He was an emperor, true to his word, and the lord of the whole earth. Due to the acquisition of (the fruit of) some act he was deprived of his kingdom. He sold his wife and son and also himself. The righteous king became the slave of a cāṇḍāla. O lord of kings resorting to truth he removed the garments of the dead; (but) that best king never swerved from truth. In this way the king passed many years. Then the king, full of anxiety, became very much distressed. "What should I do? Where should I go? How shall I escape (this)?" When he who was plunged into the ocean of sin, was thinking like this, a certain sage knowing that the king was distressed came (there). Brahmā has created brāh-

maṇas to oblige others. The best king, seeing the excellent sage, bowed (to him).

12-23. Joining the palms of his hands, he stood before Gautama. He told (him) his account accompanied by (i.e. full of) grief. Hearing the king's words, Gautama was amazed. The sage instructed the king in this vow. The sage instructed the king (in the observance of) the vow. "O king, the very auspicious Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Bhādrapada called Ajā and giving great merit has come. O king, observe its vow. Your sin will come to an end. Due to your good fortune it will fall on the seventh day (from today). Engaging yourself in a fast; keep awake at night. When thus this vow is observed, your sin will certainly perish. O best king, due to the efficacy of your religious merit, I have come (here)." Telling like this, the sage disappeared. Hearing the sage's words, the king observed the excellent vow. When the vow was observed, the king's sin perished in a moment. O best king, listen to the efficacy of this vow. There would be the end of the misery which (otherwise) would be had for many years. Due to the efficacy of the vow the king overcame his misery. He was united with his wife and lived with his son. Drums sounded in the sky and shower of flowers fell from the sky. By the efficacy of the Ekādaśī he got the kingdom free from (any) nuisance. Along with (the residents of) his city and his paraphernalia, Hariścandra obtained heaven. O king, those men who observe the vow of this kind, get free from all sins and go to heaven. By reciting (about this) vow or even by listening to (a man) would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

Padmā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada? O Keśava, tell about its deity and manner (in which it is observed).

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, I shall tell you the wonderful account which Brahmā narrated to the magnanimous Nārada.

Nārada said:

3. O Brahman, salutation to you. Tell me of what name would be the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada? I desire to hear this for propitiating Viṣṇu.

Brahmā said:

4-13. O best sage, you are Viṣṇu's devotee. You have indeed asked well. In this world there is nothing superior to this day of Viṣṇu. This Ekādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada is known as Padmā. On it Viṣṇu is worshipped. (This) excellent vow should be observed. I shall tell you an auspicious old account by just hearing which (even) a great sin perishes. A royal sage, Māndhātṛ by name, born in the family of Vivasvat, was a valorous emperor who was true to his word. He righteously looked after his subjects like his own sons. In his kingdom there was no famine. There were no agonies or diseases. His subjects were healthy and prospered with wealth and grains. The wealth in the treasury of the king was earned justly. All castes and stages of life abided by their duties. In the kingdom of that king the land resembled the desire-yielding cow. When he was ruling like this, many groups of years passed. And one year there was indeed the maturity of his acts. The cloud(s) did not shower (water) in his country for three years. By that his subjects, oppressed by hunger, were frustrated. They were without Svāhā (i.e. offerings to gods), Svadhā (i.e. oblations to dead ancestors), Vaṣaṭkāra (i.e. oblations to deities) and Vedic study. Due to his misfortune, his country was troubled by (ill) luck. Then the subjects gathered and said these words to the king:

The subjects said:

14-16. O best king, listen to the words of your subjects. In the Purāṇa(s) the wise have called *āpa* (water) *nārā* (water). That is the lord's abode. Therefore, he is called *Nārāyaṇa*. Viṣṇu, the lord in the form of rain, is present everywhere. He

alone causes rain, from rain comes up food and from that subjects (spring up). O best king, without it the subjects perish. O king, do that by which security of possession would take place.

The king said:

17-26. You have told the truth. You have told no lie. Since food is called Brahman, everything is placed in food. Beings spring up from food. The world exists due to food. This is heard in (i.e. from) the very extensive Purāṇa (literature). Due to the bad behaviour of the kings the subjects would be oppressed. (Even) thinking with my intellect I do not see anything like this done by me. Yet with a desire for the well-being of the subjects I shall strive. The king having innumerable attendants thought like this, (and) saluting the Creator went into a dense forest. He went to principal sages and to hermitages resorted to by ascetics. Then the king saw the sage Aṅgiras, Brahmā's son, who had brightened the quarters with his lustre and who was, as it were, another Brahmā. Seeing him, the delighted king got down from his vehicle, and the restrained one, with the palms of his hands joined, saluted his feet. Having greeted him with blessings (like 'May it be well with you'), he asked about the well-being of the king in the seven constituents (of the kingdom). The king told it and asked him about his health. He who was offered a seat and had received a respectful offering, sat near him. The king, asked by the sage about the reason of his arrival, replied:

The king said:

27-28. O revered one, when I was righteously looking after the earth, there was a drought. I do not see the reason for this. I have come to you to get my doubt removed. Give delight to my subjects by (securing) their welfare.

The sage said:

29-31. O king, this is the Kṛta age, best among the ages. In this (age) people are devoted to Brahman, and Dharma has four feet. In this age (only) brāhmaṇas practice penance, not other people. O king, in your country a cāṇḍāla is practising penance.

For this reason the cloud does not shower. Make an effort to kill him, by which (your) sin will come to an end.

The king said:

32. I shall not kill that innocent one practising penance. Instruct me in righteousness which will destroy the trouble.

The sage said:

33-41. If this is so, then, O king, observe the Ekādaśī-vow. In the bright half of Bhādrapada (falls the Ekādaśī) well-known as Padmā. By its power there will certainly be good rainfall. This one gives all prosperity and destroys all calamities. O king, observe its vow along with your subjects and attendants.

Having heard these words of the sage, the king came home. In the bright half of the month of Bhādrapada he along with all his subjects and the four castes observed the vow of Padmā. O king, when thus the vow was observed, the cloud showered. Land was inundated with water and was resplendent with corn. By the power of the best sage people got happiness. For this reason this excellent vow should be thus observed. On this (day) a man should give a pitcher full of water along with curd and rice and well covered, so also an umbrella and (a pair of) sandals to a brāhmaṇa. (He should pray:) "Salutations to you, O wise Govinda, called Śravaṇa. Destroying the streams of (my) sins, give me all pleasures. Give pleasures and salvation and happiness to people." By reciting or listening to (this account a man) is free from all sins.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

Indirā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. (Please) favour me and tell me, O Viṣṇu, as to what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Āśvina.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10a. The name (of the Ekādaśī falling) in the dark half of Āśvina is Indirā. By its power (even) a great sin perishes. It gives a (good) cause to the dead ancestors that have gone to (i.e. born in) a low stock. O king, listen attentively to the sin-removing great story. By hearing it a man would obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya sacrifice. Formerly, O king, in Kṛtayuga there was a prince named Indrasena. He was the lord of Māhiṣmatī. That king, endowed with glory, righteously looked after (his kingdom). He possessed sons and grandsons and had wealth and grains. The king, the lord of Māhiṣmatī, was solely devoted to Viṣṇu. The king repeating internally Viṣṇu's names giving salvation, duly passed his time and meditated upon the Supreme Spirit. When the king, one day, was comfortably seated in his assembly, there came down from the sky the sage Nārada. Seeing him to have arrived, he, getting up with the palms of his hands folded, duly honoured him and seated him on a seat. The best king said to the sage seated comfortably:

The king said:

10b-11. O best sage, by your grace everything of me is prosperous. By seeing you all my sacrifices and rites have become fruitful. O divine sage, favour me and tell me the reason of your arrival.

Nārada said:

12-18. O best king, listen to my wonderful words. O best king, from Brahmā's world I had gone to the world of Yama. Devoutly honoured by Yama, I sat on an excellent seat. The religious, truthful son of the Sun (i.e. Yama) waited upon me.

In the assembly of the deity of Śrāddhas (i.e. of Yama), I saw your father, doer of many righteous acts, there as a result of a fault in a vow. He has told (i.e. given) a message (for you). Listen to it, O lord of people. "A king known as Indrasena is the lord of Māhiṣmatī. Tell him, O brāhmaṇa, that I am staying with Yama due to some hindrance, due to my former existence. O son, giving me the religious merit of the Indirā(-vow) send me to heaven." Thus addressed, I have come to you, O king. O king, for (the attainment of) heaven by your father, observe the Indirā(-vow). By the power of that vow your father will go to heaven.

The king said:

19. O revered one, favour me and tell me about the Indirā-vow. In what manner is it to be done? In which fortnight, and on which date?

Nārada said:

20-31a. O lord of kings, listen. I (shall) tell you the manner of this auspicious vow (i.e. in which way it is to be observed). On the auspicious tenth day in the dark half of the month of Āśvina, a man, with a devout mind, should bathe in the morning. Then, bathing in the mid-day he should be composed; and with faith he should perform the Śrāddha to gratify his manes. Then eating once only, he should sleep on the ground at night. When on the Ekādaśī day the bright morning has dawned, he should wash his face without cleaning his teeth; and should devoutly take up the vow of fasting. "Remaining without food and without all pleasures to-day, I shall eat tomorrow, O lotus-eyed one. O Viṣṇu, be my refuge." Having imposed such a restriction (upon him) he should at mid-day duly bath the tip of the Śālagrāma stone. Having worshipped Viṣṇu with incense, sandal etc., he should at night keep awake in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. Then, when the morning of the twelfth day comes, he should after worshipping Viṣṇu duly perform the Śrāddha. Endowed with faith, he should perform the Śrāddha to gratify his manes. That Śrāddha which is offered with the flour of wheat would be done (in a) pure (way). So also would be the Śrāddha offered with barley, rice, sesamum-seeds, beans,

wheat and grams. O king, having honoured brāhmaṇas with gifts, he should worship them. (Then) controlled in speech, he himself should eat with his kinsmen, daughter's son and sons etc. O king, being careful observe the vow in this manner. O king, your dead ancestors will go to Viṣṇu's world.

31b-36. Speaking thus to the king, the sage disappeared, O king. The king, along with (the inmates of) his harem, and with sons and servants, observed the excellent vow in accordance with the manner told (by the sage). O son of Kuntī, when the vow was observed, a shower of flowers fell from the sky. His father, mounted on Garuḍa, went to Viṣṇu's abode. The royal sage Indrasena too, having ruled his kingdom free from nuisance and having installed his son on the throne, himself went to heaven. I have told you the importance of the Indirā-vow. A man, on reciting or listening to it is free from all sins. After enjoying all pleasures here (i.e. in this world) he would live for a long time in Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

Pāpāṅkuśā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Madhusūdana, be pleased and tell as to what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the bright half of Āśvina.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10. O lord of kings, listen. I shall tell you about the importance of the Ekādaśī which would fall in the bright half of Āśvina—the importance which destroys sins. The great (Ekādaśī) is known as Pāpāṅkuśā and removes all sins. On that day a man should worship me named Padmanābha. That fruit which a man with his senses well-controlled for a long time gets, and which leads to the acquisition of all desired objects, and which

gives men heaven and salvation, is obtained by saluting the eagle-bannered god (Viṣṇu). A man, full of delusions, having committed many sins, does not go to hell after having saluted Viṣṇu, the remover of all sins. All those sacred places and holy abodes that are there on the earth, all of them are reached (by a man) by means of reciting Viṣṇu's appellations. Those men who have submitted themselves to god Śārṅgadhara Viṣṇu, never suffer from the torments of the world of Yama. A man, after having accidentally fasted on an Ekādaśī day, does not suffer from the torments of Yama even after having committed a fearful sin. A man who being a devotee of Viṣṇu, censures Śiva, does not go to Viṣṇu's world. He certainly goes to hell. A Pāśupata who being a devotee of Śiva, censures Viṣṇu, is roasted in Raurava (hell) till the (periods of the) fourteen Indras are over.

11-22. Like the vow of Viṣṇu which destroys sins, there is no other (vow) in the three worlds that purifies (men). O king, as long as a living being would not fast on the auspicious day of Viṣṇu, sins would remain in his body. Thousands of horse sacrifices and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices do not equal to the sixteenth portion of the Ekādaśī-fast. There is no (other) vow like the Ekādaśī-vow. Even those who observe it under some pretext, do not go to Yama. This (vow) gives heaven and salvation. It gives good health of the body. This gives a wife sons; this gives wealth and friends. O king, Gaṅgā, or Gayā, or Kāśī, or Puṣkara, or Kurukṣetra is not more auspicious than the day sacred to Viṣṇu. O king, having fasted at night and fasted on the day sacred to Viṣṇu the position of Viṣṇu is obtained without trouble. A man would emancipate ten members on his mother's side, ten on his father's side, and ten on his wife's side, O lord of kings. Men (observing this) have four arms, divine forms, have banners of (Garuḍa) the enemy of serpents, and white garments, and go to Viṣṇu's abode. A man having fasted on an Ekādaśī (day) in his childhood, youth, or old age does not face a calamity, O best king. A man observing a fast on the Pāpāṅkuśā (Ekādaśī) in the bright half of Āśvina is freed from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's world. A man having given gold, sesamum-seeds, land, a cow, food and water, so also

(a pair of sandals), an umbrella (to a brāhmaṇa) does not see Yama.

23-28. He whose days come and go without meritorious acts, does not, though breathing, live, like the bellows of a blacksmith. O best king, even a poor man should make his day fruitful by always, and according to his capacity, doing acts like a bath and (giving) gifts. The doers of meritorious acts like a sacrifice, a bath, muttering (of hymns etc.), meditation, sacrificial sessions do not see (i.e. suffer from) the torments of Yama. Persons doing such meritorious acts are seen to be living a long life, possessing wealth, born in a noble family and free from diseases. What is the use of talking much in this matter. People go to (i.e. suffer from) calamities by means of unrighteousness. By means of righteous acts they go up to heaven. No doubt should be raised in this case. O sinless king, I have thus told you about the importance of Pāpāṅkuśā, about which you had asked me. What else do you want to hear?

CHAPTER SIXTY

Ramā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Janārdana, through favour and love for me, tell me what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Kārtika.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-12a. O lord of kings, listen. I shall tell you. In the dark half of Kārtika falls the very auspicious Ekādaśī. It is called Ramā. It is great and removes great sins. O king, as the occasion has come, I shall tell you its importance. O king, formerly there was a king, Mucukunda by name. He had formed friendship with (Indra) the lord of gods. He also was fully friendly with Yama, Varuṇa, Kubera, and Bibhīṣaṇa, O king. That king was

a great devotee of Viṣṇu and was true to his word. When he was ruling over his kingdom from which troublesome persons were removed, a daughter Candrabhāgā, (resembling) the excellent river (Candrabhāgā) was (born) in his house. She was given (in marriage) to Śobhana, the son of Candrasena. Once he came to his father-in-law's house, O king. The very meritorious day of the Ekādaśī-vow (also) came. When the day of the vow came, Candrabhāgā thought: 'O lord of gods, what will happen? My husband is very weak. He is not able to put up with hunger, and my father's rule is strict.' When the tenth day comes, his drum is beaten: 'Do not eat, do not eat on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu.' Hearing the sound of the drum, Śobhana said to his wife: "O dear one, what should I do? Advise me, O beautiful one."

Candrabhāgā said:

12b-15a. O lord, today nobody in my father's house is to eat (anything). On the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu elephants, horses, (their) young ones, so also other beasts are not to eat grass or (drink) water. Then, O dear one, how would human beings eat on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu? O dear one, if you eat (anything today) then you will be censured. Thinking like this to yourself, make your mind strong.

Śobhana said:

15b-23. O dear one, these words are true. I shall fast (today). Whatever is laid down by destiny will just take place in the same way.

Thus resolving, he observed the vow. With his body oppressed with hunger, he became extremely distressed. While he was thinking like this, the sun went to the western mountain. That night enhanced the joy of Viṣṇu's devotees engaged in worshipping Viṣṇu, and with their minds attached to keeping awake. (But) it became very painful to Śobhana. At the time of sunrise, Śobhana expired. The king got him cremated with (pieces of) wood fit for a king. Candrabhāgā did not abandon her body with her husband. Having performed his funeral rites, she remained in her father's house. (And) O greatest king, due to

the power of the Ramā-vow, Śobhana reached the divine charming city on the peak of the Mandara mountain, which (city) was excellent with innumerable qualities. It was adorned with large houses with golden pillars, and gems and lapis lazuli, and with beautiful crystals of different shapes.

24-28. Being praised by gandharvas, and waited upon by celestial nymphs, Śobhana mounted upon the throne. He had very white umbrella (held over his head) and chowries (were waved). He had (put on) a crown and ear-rings. He was adorned with necklaces and bracelets. There Śobhana shone like a great king of kings. In the city of Mucukunda there was (a brāhmaṇa) known as Somaśarman. The brāhmaṇa, wandering for pilgrimage, saw him. Recognising him to be the king's son-in-law he approached him. Śobhana too, knowing that Somaśarman had come, quickly got up from his seat and saluted the best brāhmaṇa. He asked him about the well-being of his father-in-law, the king, and about his wife Candrabhāgā, and about the city.

Somaśarman said:

29-31a. O king, there is well-being in your father's house. Candrabhāgā is all right and in the city everywhere there is well-being. O king, tell me your own account. It is a great wonder. Such a wonderful and beautiful city has not been seen by anyone. O king, tell me this: How did you obtain this?

Śobhana said:

31b-32. In the dark half of Kārtika falls the Ekādaśī called Ramā. Having fasted on that day, I have secured this unstable city. O best brāhmaṇa, do that by which it will be stable.

The brāhmaṇa said:

33. O lord of kings, how (i.e. why) is it unstable? How will it be stable? Tell me the truth. Then I shall do it, not otherwise.

Śhobana said:

34-35. O brāhmaṇa, I observed this best vow without faith. Therefore, I think, it is unstable. Listen (by which) it will be

stable. The very beautiful Candrabhāgā is Mucukunda's daughter. Tell her this account. (Then) it will be stable.

Kṛṣṇa said:

36. Hearing his words, he went to the city of Mucukunda; (and) the brāhmaṇa narrated the entire account to Candrabhāgā.

Somaśarman said:

37. O auspicious one, I actually saw your beloved husband. I (also) saw his unconquerable city resembling (that of) Indra. He described it to be unstable. Do that by which it will be stable.

Candrabhāgā said:

38-45. O brāhmaṇa-sage, take me, desiring to see my husband, there. By means of the merit of my vow I shall make the city stable. O brāhmaṇa, do that by which we two shall be united. Great religious merit is obtained by bringing together the separated ones.

Hearing this, Somaśarman went with her to Vāmadeva's hermitage near the Mandara mountain. Vāmadeva listened to the full account told by them. He sprinkled (water over) the bright Candrabhāgā with Vedic hymns. By the power of the hymn recited by the sage, and due to observing the vow on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu her body became divine and she obtained a divine condition. With her eyes dilated due to great joy she approached her husband. Seeing his wife to have come, Śobhana was very much delighted. Calling her he made her sit on his left side. Then Candrabhāgā said (these) dear words to her husband: "O dear one, listen to the beneficial words: I have religious merit. When I crossed the eighth year (while living) in my father's house.

46-54. I have since then, observed the Ekādaśī vow in the manner as it was told and with my mind full of faith. By the power of that (religious merit) the city will be stable. It will be rich in all desired objects till the final deluge." O best king, in this way she, enjoying divine pleasures, of a divine form, and adorned with divine ornaments, rejoiced with her husband.

Śobhana, of a divine body, also rejoiced with her on the peak of Mandara mountain by the power of the Ramā-vow. This vow is like the desire-yielding gem or like the desire-yielding cow. O king, I have told you about the (Ekādaśī) called Ramā. O sinless one, you have heard its full importance. I have told you the sin-destroying importance of the vows of the Ekādaśīs of both the fortnights. As is the (one of the) dark (fortnight), so is the (one of the) bright fortnight. No discrimination should be done between the two. Ekādaśī, when observed, gives pleasures and salvation to men. As a white cow is like a black one—as their milk is similar, similarly the two Ekādaśīs are said to give a similar fruit. A man who listens to the importance of the Ekādaśī-vows is freed from all sins and is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER SIXTYONE

Prabodhinī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Kṛṣṇa, I have duly heard from you the importance of Ramā (Ekādaśī). O you who respect (others, now) tell me about the Ekādaśī falling in the bright half of Kārtika.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, I shall tell you about (the Ekādaśī) falling in the bright half of Kārtika, as it was told by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds, to Nārada.

Nārada said:

3. Tell me in detail the importance of the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) on which Viṣṇu, the propounder of righteousness, keeps awake.

Brahmā said:

4-11. O best sage, listen to the greatness of Prabodhinī which destroys sins, which increases religious merit, and which

gives salvation to men of good minds. Till the Prabodhinī of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu (falling) in Kārtika does not arrive, all the holy places including the oceans and the lakes roar. O best brāhmaṇa, Gaṅgā-Bhāgīrathī roars on the earth till the Ekādaśī awakening Viṣṇu (and falling) in Kārtika and destroying sins has not come. A man would obtain even through one fast on the Prabodhinī (day) (that which is obtained by means of) thousands of horse-sacrifices, and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices. The Haribodhinī (i.e. Prabodhinī Ekādaśī) gives, O son, even that which is difficult to obtain, which is difficult to reach, and which is not within the range of the three worlds, even though it is not asked for. The Haribodhinī, when fasted on, gives people splendour, wealth, intellect, kingdom, happiness and riches. This (Ekādaśī) that destroys sins, burns even when it is fasted on once the sins that are declared and have the size of Meru and Mandara. Keeping awake at night on this (Ekādaśī) burns like a heap of cotton the sin committed in thousands of former existences.

12-20. O best sage, he who, according to his nature, duly observes a fast on Prabodhinī, gets the fruit as declared (in sacred texts). O best among the excellent sages, a man who duly does the good act as enjoined, gets the fruit (as large) as Meru. He who without the proper manner does a good act as much (i.e. as big) as Meru, obtains its fruit just of the measure of an atom, O Nārada. The dead ancestors of those who will devoutly observe (the vow of) Prabodhinī, are delighted and live in Viṣṇu's world. A man, even after having committed a terrible sin like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, is freed from the hellish misery and goes to the highest place of Viṣṇu (on observing the Prabodhinī-vow). Having kept awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, the sins of a man are washed. O brāhmaṇa, that fruit difficult to obtain by means of the sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice, is easily obtained by means of keeping awake on Prabodhinī. A man obtains that fruit by keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, which he would get by bathing in all holy places and by giving gold or land. He who has observed the Prabodhinī in Kārtika, is alone born fortunate and has himself only purified his family. Though death is certain for men, wealth and body are uncertain.

21-25. Realising this, O best sage, the day of (i.e. sacred to)

Viṣṇu should be observed (as a fast-day). All the holy places that are there in the three worlds, are (present) in the house of the one who properly observes the (fast on) the Prabodhinī. What is the use of many (other) acts of religious merit for him who has observed (a fast on) the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī)? This Haribodhinī (falling) in Kārtika gives sons and grandsons. He (alone) is wise, is a meditating saint, an ascetic, and has controlled his senses (who fasts on Prabodhinī). He (who) fasts on Haribodhinī, gets pleasures and salvation. This one, helping the essence of righteousness, is very dear to Viṣṇu. A man who devoutly observes (this vow) would enjoy pleasures. By fasting on Prabodhinī a man does not enter a womb (i.e. he is not reborn).

26-33. Therefore, giving up all other meritorious acts, a man should observe (this vow). All the sin committed through deeds, mind and speech is washed by Viṣṇu on a man's keeping awake on Prabodhinī. All that a man does like a bath, (giving) a gift, muttering (hymns), worship in honour of Viṣṇu on Prabodhinī is inexhaustible. Those men who devoutly worship god Viṣṇu on that day and observe a fast on that day, are free from sins incurred during hundreds of existences. O son, this is a great vow which destroys a stream of great sins. A man should duly fast on the day of Viṣṇu's being awake and should please Viṣṇu with this vow. Illuminating all quarters he goes to Viṣṇu's abode. Men desiring brilliance and wealth should carefully observe this. Viṣṇu worshipped on this day, washes men's sin which is accumulated (by them) in their childhood, in their youth, and in their old age, so also the sin committed during hundreds of existences, even if it is small or great. This one brings wealth and grains, is auspicious, is great and removes all sins.

34-41a. By fasting on it through devotion for Viṣṇu, there would be nothing difficult to obtain. The fruit which is obtained (on bathing) at the lunar or the solar eclipse, is said to be thousandfold by keeping awake on the Prabodhinī. All that—bath, (giving) gifts, muttering (hymns), sacrifice, self-study, Viṣṇu's worship, done on Prabodhinī becomes crorefold. All the religious merit that would be earned by a man from his birth, becomes fruitless if the vow in Kārtika is not observed. O Nārada, a man who would spend Kārtika without observing the vow of Viṣṇu, does not obtain the fruit of the religious

merit earned during his existence. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, with all efforts he should serve Viṣṇu, the god of gods. It gives all desired objects. A man devoted to Viṣṇu, should avoid others' food in Kārtika. By avoiding others' food, he would obtain the fruit of the Cāndrāyaṇa-vow. A man who would spend every day of Kārtika in (pursuing) sacred texts would burn all (his) sins, and would obtain the fruit of a myriad sacrifices.

41b-48a. Viṣṇu is not so much pleased with sacrifices, gifts, and Vājapeya etc. as he is pleased with the narration of stories from the sacred texts in Kārtika. Those who narrate Viṣṇu's account or listen to (his) auspicious accounts, or to half a verse or a quarter of a verse in Kārtika obtain the fruit of (having given) a hundred cows. Giving up all other righteous acts, sacred texts should be discussed and grasped in Kārtika before (the image of) Viṣṇu, O great sage. O best sage, he who, with (a desire for) the highest good and any (other) desire, narrates (or listens to) Viṣṇu's accounts in Kārtika, would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family. A man who regularly listens to Viṣṇu's account, especially in Kārtika, obtains the fruit of (having given) a thousand cows. O sage, he who listens to Viṣṇu's account on the day of his awakening (i.e. on the Prabodhinī Ekādaśī) obtains that fruit (which is obtained) by giving (the earth) with the seven islands. O best sage, eternal world (of gods) is said to be reached by them who, after hearing the divine account of Viṣṇu, honour according to their own capacity the knower (i.e. the reader) of the account.

48b-54. O Nārada, that man who would pass Kārtika in singing and in pursuing sacred texts, is not seen by me to be reborn. O sage, the man, a meritorious soul, who does (i.e. engages himself in) singing, dancing, (playing on) musical instruments, and (listens to) the auspicious account of Viṣṇu, remains above the three worlds. With many flowers, with many fruits and camphor, agaru and saffron, Viṣṇu's worship should be done on the Prabodhinī day in Kārtika, from which immeasurable religious merit is obtained, O best sage. At the time of keeping awake on the Prabodhinī (night) respectful offering with various kinds of fruits should be made after taking water in a conch. A crore-fold of fruit which (is obtained by bathing)

at all holy places, that fruit which (is had) by means of all gifts, is got by giving a respectful offering on the Prabodhinī day. After that the preceptor should be honoured with a meal, a covering etc., so also with gifts in order to please the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu), O divine sage.

55-68. A man who listens to Bhāgavata, and a man who would listen to a Purāṇa, would obtain for every letter (of the text) the fruit due to the gift of a tawny cow. O best sage, for him who observes, according to his capacity, the vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu, as has been laid down, salvation is certainly secured. Madhusūdana, the eagle-bannered god, worshipped with one ketakī-leaf, becomes very much pleased for a thousand years. The fire of hell is put out by seeing him who would worship Viṣṇu with agasti-leaves, O divine sage. Viṣṇu, the greatest person, when worshipped with mango-leaves in Kārtika, gives desired objects, as at the lunar or the solar eclipse. He who, leaving all (other) flowers, devoutly worships Viṣṇu with mango-blossoms, would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. O child, all the sin of those, (even) of a myriad existences, who offer Tulasī-leaves and flowers to Viṣṇu in Kārtika, would burn. Tulasī is auspicious if it is always seen, touched, meditated upon, described, praised, planted, sprinkled and worshipped. O sage, those who everyday are devoted to Tulasī in (these) nine ways, produce religious merit lasting for thousands of crores of yugas. O sage, as long as Tulasī planted by men on the earth grows with branches, twigs, seeds, flowers and leaves, (the persons) that are born or will be born in their families, live in Viṣṇu's house for (many) thousand years till universal deluge. That fruit which exists in all flowers and leaves, is obtained by (offering) a Tulasī-leaf (to Viṣṇu) in Kārtika. Seeing that Kārtika has arrived, great Viṣṇu should be regularly worshipped with tender Tulasī-leaves. The religious merit obtained by the performance of hundreds of sacrifices and giving many gifts is obtained by worshipping Viṣṇu with Tulasī-leaves in Kārtika.

CHAPTER SIXTYTWO

Kamalā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-4. O revered one, I desire to listen to the best of the vows (in honour) of Viṣṇu, which removes all sins and gives (its) fruit to those who observe it. O Janārdana, tell me the account of Viṣṇu's month; what is the manner in which it is observed? What is its fruit? Which deity is worshipped during it? O Janārdana, tell me about the vow that is observed when the intercalary month arrives. What is the fruit of what gift? What should be done by men, O lord? In what a bath (should be taken)? What (hymns) should be muttered? What is said to be the manner of the worship? Which best food should be eaten in this Puruṣottama-month?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

5-18. Through love for you, I shall, O best king, narrate the sin-destroying greatness of the Puruṣottama-month. That Ekādaśī day which would come when the intercalary month has arrived, is called Kamalā, and is the best of days. By the power of that vow Lakṣmī would be favourable. One who observes (this) vow, should get up in the early part of the day, and having remembered Viṣṇu, he should duly bathe and should observe the vow. Muttering (of his names) in the house has one-fold effect, while that of doing it in a river has double that effect. (The effect) is more than a thousand-fold (if the muttering is done) in a cow-pen; and is a hundred-fold (if it is done) at auspicious, holy places and in the proximity of deities. (The effect) is a lakh(-fold if the muttering) is done near Tulasī and is infinite (if it is done) near (the image of) Viṣṇu. In Avantī there was an excellent brāhmaṇa, Śivaśarman (by name). He had five sons. The youngest one was hurtful. Then (i.e. so) he was abandoned by his father and forsaken by kinsmen and relatives. Due to the power of his bad deeds he went to a very distant forest. Once fortunately he went to the best holy place. Emaciated with hunger, having a melancholy face, he bathed in Triveṇī. Oppressed by hunger, there he looked for sages' hermi-

tages. In the Puruṣottama month and the gathering of people, there he saw the excellent hermitage of the sage Harimitra. From the mouth of the brāhmaṇas, telling a sin-destroying tale, he devoutly listened to the account of Kamalā in the hermitage. The Ekādaśī is most auspicious, and gives pleasures and salvation. Having duly heard about this Kamalā day—that the Ekādaśī is most auspicious and gives pleasures and salvation, Jayaśarman at that time observed the vow with them in the lonely temple. When it was night, Lakṣmī came there. (She said:) "O brāhmaṇa, due to the power of Kamalā I (shall) grant you a boon."

Jayaśarman said:

19-20. O beautiful one, who are you? To whom do you belong? How are you pleased with me? Are you Indrāṇī (the wife) of the lord of gods, or Bhavānī (the wife) of Śaṅkara? Or (are you) a female gandharva, a female kinnara or the spouse of either the Moon or the Sun? O you of a beautiful face, I have neither seen nor heard about the like of you.

Lakṣmī said:

21-24a. Now I am pleased. Being urged by the god of gods due to the efficacy of (the vow of) Kamalā, I have come from Vaikuṇṭha. At Prayāga, near the sages, you have observed the vow of that (Ekādaśī) which would fall in the bright half of the Puruṣottama month. O best brāhmaṇa, there is no doubt that by the power of this vow in your family will be born (those) men (who) will, through my favour, obtain (good position). I have told the truth.

The brāhmaṇa said:

24b-25a. O Lakṣmī, if you are pleased, then explain the vow in detail, which those brāhmaṇas that are good introduce in tales.

Lakṣmī said:

25b-30a. This is the best (account) for the listeners to listen. It is the most holy. It is auspicious and removes bad dreams.

Therefore, it should be carefully heard. The best man who reads devotedly a verse or half a verse, is instantly freed from crores of great sins. As Garuḍa is among the birds, this is the best among months. This Dvādaśī day is among the days as the Gaṅgā is among the rivers. Even now all the gods desiring to be born in Bhārata, duly worship that Nārāyaṇa Anāmaya. The groups of deities like Brahmā always worship those who devoutly worship the lord, god Viṣṇu.

30b-43. Those who are engrossed in (muttering Viṣṇu's) names, so also those who are engaged in the narration (of the virtues of Viṣṇu), so also those who are intent upon worshipping Viṣṇu are fortunate in the Kali age. There would be the couple of Ekādaśīs: (the one) in the bright half, (the other) in the dark half. The householders should observe (a fast on) the former, and for the ascetics the latter is prescribed. (The three days—) Ekādaśī, Dvādaśī and Trayodaśī partly in the night (after Dvādaśī, are auspicious). If the fast is broken on Trayodaśī, the religious merit is that of a hundred sacrifices. "O Puṇḍarīka, fasting on the Ekādaśī day, I shall eat on the next day. O Acyuta, be my refuge." Uttering this hymn of (i.e. sacred to) the god of gods, the Disc-holder, he, with his mind pleased, should devoutly observe a fast. The restrained observer of the vow should keep awake in front of the deity with songs, musical instruments, dances and Purāṇa-recitals. Then the observer of the vow, having got up (early) in the morning, having bathed and with his senses controlled should duly worship Viṣṇu. By bathing (the image of) Viṣṇu with pañcāmṛta[1] on Ekādaśī, and with water on Dvādaśī, a man gets assimilation into Viṣṇu. O Keśava, favour me, and be (well-)disposed through this vow to me who am blinded by the darkness of ignorance, and give me the sight of knowledge. Having thus prayed to the lord of the god of gods, the Mace-holder, he should devoutly feed brāhmaṇas and give them gifts. Then, controlled in speech and solely devoted to Viṣṇu, he should offer the five great sacrifices[2] and eat along with his relatives. He who, being controlled,

1. Pañcāmṛta: A collection of five sweet things, viz., milk, sugar, ghī, curd and honey used in worshipping a deity.

2. Mahāyajña: See Manu. 69.71. They are: the sacrifices offered to Brahma, deities, manes, human beings and beings.

observes in this way the auspicious Ekādaśī-vow goes to Viṣṇu's abode, return from which is difficult.

Speaking thus, and granting him a boon, Lakṣmī disappeared. The brāhmaṇa too, being rich came to his father's house.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

O king, he who would in this way observe the excellent vow of the Kamalā (Ekādaśī), and would listen to (Viṣṇu's account) on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu is freed from all sins.

CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

Kāmadā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-9. O lord of the world, I have heard about vows having many virtues. But, O Janārdana, I have heard nothing like the Ekādaśī(-vow). Again tell about the Ekādaśī(-vow) which destroys sins and gives religious merit and observing which a man would obtain the highest position in the world.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

O lord of the world, whether the Ekādaśī would be in the bright or the dark fortnight, it is not to be omitted, as it (gives) salvation and enhances happiness. O king, in the Kali-age, Ekādaśī frees a man from the bonds of the mundane existence, gives all desired objects, and destroys all sins on the earth. O best king, the Ekādaśī (falling) on a Sunday or a Tuesday or on the day of the passage of the Sun or a Planet through a Zodiacal sign should always be fasted on. It increases (the number of) sons and grandsons. Those to whom Viṣṇu is dear, should never give up the Ekadāśī-vow. It always gives a (long) life, fame, progeny and health. The Ekādaśī-vow always gives salvation, (handsome) form, kingdom. O king, those men who, endowed with great faith, observe it in the manner as is laid down, are of the form of Viṣṇu. O king, undoubtedly they are seen to be liberated while living.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

O Kṛṣṇa, how is it that those who are seen to be of the form of sin (i.e. who are sinners), are liberated while living, and are of the nature of Viṣṇu? I have a great curiosity.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

10-22. O king, how are they who in the Kali-age observe devoutly and according to the acts as are laid down in the sacred texts, the excellent Ekādaśī-vow without (drinking) water, not of the form of Viṣṇu or not liberated while living? There is no other auspicious vow like that of Ekādaśī which removes all sins and gives all desired objects to men. Having eaten once only on the Daśamī day, and observed the vow without drinking water on the Nandā (Ekādaśī day) and having broken the fast on the Bhadrā (day), men become similar to Viṣṇu. A faithful man who observes the auspicious vow of the Kāmadā (Ekādaśī) obtains his desired (objects) in this and in the next world. This (vow) is pure, purifying, and destroys great sins. O best king, this one gives pleasures and salvation to those who observe it. A man should duly worship Viṣṇu on Kāmadā with flowers, incense etc., so also with offerings of food. A devotee of Viṣṇu, who observes the vow, should avoid these ten (articles) on Daśamī: bell-metal, flesh, beans, grams, kodrava, vegetables, honey, food offered by others, eating food and sexual union. On the Ekādaśī day he should avoid gambling, sport, sleep, tāmbūla, brushing his teeth, censuring others, wickedness, harming (others) and sex, (so also he should avoid) anger, false words on the Ekādaśī day. On the Dvādaśī day he should avoid bell-metal, flesh, beans, oil, false speech, exertion, journey, food and sexual union, (mounting upon) a bull's back, others' food, and vegetables. O king, those who have observed the Kāmadā (Ekādaśī) in this manner, and having after keeping awake at night, worshipped Viṣṇu, are freed from all sins and go to the best position. O king, by reciting (about) or listening to this vow (a man) would obtain the fruit of (having given) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

The Importance of Cāturmāsya

Nārada said:

1-2. O great god, I desire to hear about the restraints to be observed during the four months that are well-known on the earth. (Please) tell them. O lord, tell me what should be done during the four months (from the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha to the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Kārtika) when Viṣṇu, Janārdana has gone to sleep? (Tell me) the fruit (obtained) on giving up the six flavours and keeping (i.e. not cutting) hair and nails, and (the fruit obtained) through other restraints.

Sūta said:

3-7. Hearing these words, the god with his eyes dilated, laughed, and said to Nārada, the best brāhmaṇa and treasure of penance:

Mahādeva said:

Now, O divine sage, listen. I am telling in detail. A man should observe a fast on the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha. He should devoutly observe the Cāturmāsya-vows. When Viṣṇu is asleep, the wan should lie on the bare ground and should pass the four months till Kārtikī (Ekādaśī) would come. No installation (of an image) or rites like sacrifices take place. So also marriages, thread ceremonies, other auspicious ceremonies, royal journeys and processions do not take place (in Cāturmāsya).

8-15. Listen to the fruit of the vow of him (i.e. that he gets) who would observe vows (and practise) rites when the Garuḍa-bannered, Acyuta, Jagannātha is asleep. A man would obtain that fruit by observing the vows in Cāturmāsya which he would obtain by means of thousands of horse-sacrifices. He should make Viṣṇu sleep when the Sun is in Gemini; and should awaken Viṣṇu, when the Sun is in Libra. When the intercalary month comes, the order of the rite is like this: He should install Viṣṇu's image holding a conch, a disc, and a mace. O

Nārada, he should place the auspicious (image) wearing a yellow garment on a bed covered with a white (piece of) cloth and a pillow. And the Viṣṇu devotee, knowing (accounts in) history and Purāṇas, should bathe it with curd, milk, honey, fried grains and ghee. O brāhmaṇa, he should smear it with auspicious sandal, incense and lovely flowers, and should worship it with white flowers with (the accompaniment of) this sacred prayer: "O Jagannātha, when you are asleep, this world would be asleep. When you are awake, the world with the mobile and the immobile would be awake."

16-29. Thus (i.e. with this prayer), O Nārada, having installed that image of Viṣṇu, he should, in front of it, take up the vow: The person (taking up the vow) may be a male or a female devotee of him, according to the division between righteousness and unrighteousness. For four months, till the awakening of the god, he should take up these restraints preceded by brushing the teeth. Then he should observe a fast. When it is the bright morning, he, having conquered his self, should do his daily acts. I shall separately tell the fruits of the doers of the acts: A man, by avoiding jaggery, would secure sweetness. A man would obtain a long(-lived) progeny by avoiding oil. O brāhmaṇa, a man becomes handsome-bodied by avoiding ghee. He would secure his enemy's destruction by avoiding bitter oil. He would secure matchless good fortune by avoiding fragrant oil. He who avoids enjoying flowers, would be a vidyādhara in heaven. A man who practises abstract meditation, would obtain Brahmā's position. He who would avoid the six flavours, viz. acrid, sour, sweet, saline, pungent, and astringent, would avoid deformity and a bad smell. By avoiding tāmbūla he becomes an enjoyer and has his throat red. By avoiding ghee he (secures) handsomeness and his body would always be glossy. O best brāhmaṇa, by giving up fruits he gets many sons. By eating from a palāśa-leaf he would be handsome and would get pleasures. One who illuminates would become bright and actually the lord of wealth. He who avoids curd and milk, obtains Goloka.[1] The order of him who observes the vow of silence, is never futile.

1. Goloka: 'Cow-world', a part of heaven, or (in later mythology) Kṛṣṇa's heaven.

By avoiding a dish of barley or rice boiled in milk he secures Indra's seat. He, abiding in religious practices and taking delight in them, would, after muttering the hundred-fold fruitful (prayer) 'Salutation to Nārāyaṇa', be the only lord of vidyādharas in heaven.

30-41. He who always enjoys the fruit of a bath in Gaṅgā by merely bathing at Puṣkara would be the lord of the earth. O wise one, he who would anoint and bathe Viṣṇu in his house would live for a kalpa in Vaikuṇṭha. There is no doubt about this. That man who goes round (the image) keeping it to his right, goes with (i.e. in) a divine aeroplane to which swans are yoked. He who sings and plays upon musical instruments would go to the world of gandharvas. O wise one, one who eats the five products of a cow, would obtain the fruit of the Cāndrāyaṇa(-vow). He who would amuse people every day with recitations from sacred texts, gets the form of Vyāsa before Viṣṇu, and then would obtain Viṣṇu's position. By worshipping (him with) the Tulasī-leaf he would go to Viṣṇu's city. Having done sprinkling, he would obtain the divine place of the celestial nymphs. By bathing with cold water in his house he would obtain a spotless, body. By avoiding a bath with hot water he would get the fruit of a bath at Puṣkara. A man who eats from leaves would obtain the fruit (of a bath) at Kurukṣetra. He who everyday sleeps on a slab of stone gets the merit due to (a bath at) Prayāga. By avoiding (drinking) water for three days he is not overcome by diseases. He who eats from copper vessels would obtain the fruit of (a bath at) Naimiṣa. Avoiding bell-metal he should use the remaining vessels. If no (other) vessels are available, he should use an earthen pot or vessels made by him of palāśa leaves or taken from others. The wise man who for one year keeps the sacred fire and the wise one who eats from the vessels—both these are said to be equal.

42-49. The eating from the vessels made of lotus-leaves is said to be equal to the Cāndrāyaṇa-vow. O brāhmaṇa, each of the meals taken from the lotus-leaves is said to to equal to (the vow of) three nights. The fruit which is said (to accrue) from the Ekādaśī-fast is (the same as) the fruit of giving everything. He would get the fruit of (visiting) all holy places. He would not see hell on eating from lotus-leaves. A brāhmaṇa goes to

Vaikuṇṭha. The others would obtain heaven. This great divine tree is sin-destroying and gives all desired objects. O best king, a śūdra should avoid the (use of) the middle leaf. If he eats from that he would get (i.e. live in) hell for a period of fourteen Indras. He should avoid the middle leaf and eat from others. O brāhmaṇa, that śūdra who eats his meal from the middle leaf, would be purified by giving a tawny cow to a brāhmaṇa, not otherwise. A śūdra who would get a cow milked in his house, and would drink (that milk), would be born as an insect in the feces (and remain like that) for ten thousand years. And being freed from the insect-stock, he would get the beast-stock (i.e. will be born as a beast).

50-63. That man (belonging to the) śūdra (caste), who would drive a tawny bull, is, O Nārada, roasted in the Kumbhīpāka (hell) for as many years as are the hair (on his body). There is no doubt about it. If especially the śūdra has a shegoat in his house, he, drinking her milk goes to Raurava (hell). That śūdra who deals with a brāhmaṇa, is said to be belonging to a noble family, and the brāhmaṇa would be cast out (of the fold of) the Vedas. A brāhmaṇa who, prompted to doing trade, obeys a śūdra, becomes the resident of hell for as many years as he walks the steps. If a brāhmaṇa is sent by a śūdra for getting water to his house, he would go to hell by drinking that water which is like liquor. A śūdra should always give gifts to a brāhmaṇa. He should especially be devoted to him (i.e. a brāhmaṇa). Enjoying pleasures here, he goes to the next world. This (world) fashioned with the five elements is said to be useless. Therefore, he should give (gifts) to his preceptor. By that he would obtain inexhaustible fruit. O best brāhmaṇa, in this fearful Kali-age, full of sinful conduct, the wicked ones censure men of meritorious deeds. Due to censure (of others) a man becomes unhappy till the universal deluge. O wise one, there are many practices in the Kali-age. The religious practice giving merit, fulfilling desires and giving salvation is rare. A man who sleeps on the bare ground on the earth, is not troubled by diseases for ten thousand years. The man endowed with many sons and wealth, becomes free from leprosy. A man who eats (only) at night, would obtain the fruit of a pilgrimage. Without asking he gets the fruit of constructing wells and tanks. So also he who,

averse to taking (someone's) life, would avoid treachery. It is told in the Vedas that non-violence is a great virtue.

64-80. I have heard that everywhere giving gifts, kindness and restraint (are great virtues). Therefore, even by the great these should be done with a great effort. He who gives his body, sons and grandsons to his preceptor, would by the efficacy of the gift, become dear to Viṣṇu. He who is initiated by a śūdra, and the śūdra who initiates him—both are said to be sinners till the universal deluge. That most sinful śūdra who would advise harm, drops twentyone (members of) his family into hell. O brāhmaṇa, in the Kali-age many śūdras who are heretics are seen. Even for conversing with them hell is (visited by a man). By merely seeing the śūdras who are engaged in (getting) sacred knowledge and who mutter the Gāyatrī (hymn), (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa comes (to him who sees them). The brāhmaṇas having (marks of) conches and discs and accepted in the Vaiṣṇava sects, and always engaged in duties enjoined by the Vedas, purify (even) the respectable brāhmaṇas. This should always be done in the Cāturmāsya. What is the use of telling others things again and again, O brāhmaṇa? Those men who are Viṣṇu's devotees are blessed on the earth. Their family is most blessed, and their caste is said to be most blessed. The sin of him who would eat honey when Viṣṇu is asleep, would be great. Listen to what happens on avoiding it. He would obtain that fruit which he would get by all various sacrifices. He should avoid pomegranates, citrons and coconuts. Becoming a deity and moving in an aeroplane, he would go to Viṣṇu's position. The fortunate one, being rich, is born in an affluent family. That man who would pass the four months by eating once only, is honoured in Viṣṇu's world for as many thousand years as the muhūrtas after the sun have passed. That man who would avoid rice, barley and wheat (in the Cāturmāsya), would get that fruit which is declared by the sages to be the fruit of a horse-sacrifice duly performed with gifts. He possesses wealth and grains and has many sons. The fruit of offering with Tulasī(-leaves), sesamum-seeds and darbhas, is especially crore-fold in Cāturmāsya, when he would do it with the three articles (like Tulasī-leaves) when Viṣṇu is asleep.

81-94. They too rejoice near Viṣṇu for crores of yugas. Those who sing a line or half a line, half a ṛk or ṛks in front of Viṣṇu, are undoubtedly released. He who avoids sexual union when god (Viṣṇu is asleep, i.e. during the Cāturmāsya) is honoured in Viṣṇu's world for the period of a Manu. By avoiding curd, milk, so also butter milk, jaggery and vegetables, a man gets release. There is no doubt about it. O sage, those men who, day after day, bathe (with water mixed) with āmalaka, obtain great religious merit, (for) the wise say that the dhātrī (i.e. āmalaka)-fruit destroys sins. (Dhātrī) was formerly created by Brahmā for the emancipation of the three worlds. He who practises sandhyā and silence for the four months, rejoices in Vaikuṇṭha for the periods of four Manus. A man who cooks for himself and eats the food (cooked by himself) for four months is honoured in Indra's world for ten thousand years. A man should resort to silence during the four months of the rainy season. He would go to Viṣṇu's world, and after that to Brahmā's (world). A man who observes silence while eating, never perishes. The demons observing silence while eating, went to heaven. A man would be impure (due to) food with (i.e containing) worms and insects. Such food should be known as equal to cow-flesh, O best brāhmaṇa. That food should be known to be impure. If a man eats that, that is said to be the food which is always dear to the demons. Formerly Brahmā was pleased. That magnanimous one gave it. (Men) having eaten silently, have undoubtedly gone to heaven. If a man eats food while talking, then by that it would become impure. He just eats sin. Therefore, he should observe silence. O Nārada, eating silently should be known to be like (observing) a fast.

95-110. There is no doubt that the five (great) sins of him who, the best man, eats after giving the five oblations to the five breaths[1], are destroyed. O brāhmaṇa, a garment that has joints should be worn at the time of a rite (in honour of) the manes. That garment remaining on an impure body would be impure. A man who, with a garment put around his waist on his back, passes excrement or urinates, or has sexual union, should avoid that garment (while doing holy rites). O brāhmaṇa, the rite

1. Prāṇāhuti: Oblations offered to the five vital breaths, viz. Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna and Samāna.

especially in honour of the manes should be avoided (when such a garment is put on). O sage, at all times the worship of god (Viṣṇu), the disc-holder, should especially be done by those who have controlled their senses. When Viṣṇu is asleep, grassy vegetables and safflower (should be avoided). So also garments having joints should be carefully avoided. He who avoids these in Cāturmāsya, when Viṣṇu is asleep, would not go to hell till the universal deluge. One should not (drink) liquor, should not eat flesh of a rabbit or a pig. That man also, on being engaged in harmlessness, when, especially in Cāturmāsya, god Viṣṇu is asleep, obtains godhead. O best brāhmaṇa, he who has given up uselessly getting angry or harsh, so also sexual union on the parvan days, would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. On celibacy (being observed) the progeny grows, so also life. He should avoid flowers, leaves, fruits, a couch, rubbing his body with unctuous substances and anointing (it), so also (taking) milk for no reason, flesh and liquor. Whatever is given up in Cāturmāsya when Viṣṇu is asleep, should first be given to a brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt about this. That wealth which is given to a brāhmaṇa, is, O wise one, inexhaustible. O brāhmaṇa, thereby he gets crorefold merit. There is no doubt about this. O best brāhmaṇa, with whatever vow Viṣṇu is worshipped, he gives Viṣṇu's abode. No doubt should be raised in this matter. He who, in the Cāturmāsya when Viṣṇu is asleep, does not have a vow, goes to hell, (and) his life has passed in vain. That man who everyday observes the excellent vow as told by a brāhmaṇa, so also the restraints that have been told, goes to the highest position. The gift given without the three things (viz. Tulasī, sesamum-seeds and darbhas) becomes useless.

111-112. Therefore, the best man, should according to his capacity and with all efforts please with vows and gifts Viṣṇu, the god of gods. All that gift (that is given) and that honouring of the brāhmaṇas done without bathing are useless till the regimes of fourteen Indras last.

Nārada said:

113. O lord, O master of the universe, tell me what kind of celibacy is that, having practised which human beings would pleased Viṣṇu.

Mahādeva said:

114-121. He who is devoted to his wife is said to be a celibate by the wise. O wise one, he who would forsake his wife, is inferior to a cāṇḍāla. Approaching the wife during her menses is said to be celibacy. The man who abandons his devoted, faultless wife, is a sinner in the world, and would obtain the (sin of) causing an abortion. Thousands of horse-sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices are not equal even to a sixteenth part of the Ekādaśī-fast. All (such things as) bathing, (giving) gifts, muttering (hymns), sacrifices, self-study and worship of deities done in the Cāturmāsya are inexhaustible. He who listens to the Purāṇa one time or two times, gets free from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's world. O best brāhmaṇa, he who, when Viṣṇu is asleep, recites or mutters his name, gets a crorefold fruit of it. A brāhmaṇa devoted to Viṣṇu, who worships (Viṣṇu), he alone, the soul of the entire religion, is worthy of respect. There is no doubt. On hearing this auspicious, pure, sin-destroying (account of) Cāturmāsya, a man obtains religious merit, and would obtain the fruit of a bath in Gaṅgā.

CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

Cāturmāsya Vow to be Concluded Properly

Nārada said:

1. O lord, tell me about bringing to the conclusion the vows in the Cāturmāsya. (For) when the vows are (properly) concluded, everything certainly becomes complete.

Mahādeva said:

2-20. If, O magnanimous one, he who observes a vow, does not bring it to the (proper) conclusion, then he would not get the proper fruit. He, having had a deficiency in the vow becomes a leper or blind. For this reason, (a man) should bring the vow to (proper) conclusion. Having accepted these vows and

observed them duly, he should go to a brāhmaṇa after Viṣṇu who had slept, gets up. He should, duly and in detail, apologise to the god of gods. If he had avoided (the use of) oil during the Cāturmāsya, he should give ghee (to a brāhmaṇa); and if he had avoided (using) ghee (during the Cāturmāsya) he should offer milk (to a brāhmaṇa). After observing silence he should give sesamum-seeds to a brāhmaṇa. If (he had avoided) meal (in the Cāturmāsya) he should offer a meal rich in curd and rice to a brāhmaṇa. He should especially give food along with gold. O best sage, by giving food (to a brāhmaṇa) he is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu. The man who eats from the pot (i.e. plate) made from palāśa(-leaves) for the four months, should give (to a brāhmaṇa) a pot full of ghee, O brāhmaṇa. When he has eaten only at night (during the four months), he should give a meal with the six flavours to a brāhmaṇa. He should give a bull with gold to a brāhmaṇa who does not ask for it. He who had abandoned beans should give (a brāhmaṇa) a cow with her calf, O best sage. On having bathed (with water mixed) with dhātrī, he should give gold of the weight of a māṣa. If he had observed the vow of (not eating) fruits, he should give fruits. For the vow of (not eating) grains, he should give grains. Or rice is said (to be given). Similarly for (his vow of) sleeping on the ground, he should give a cotton-bed with a pillow. O best brāhmaṇa, he who had observed celibacy during the Cāturmāsya, should devoutly give food to a brāhmaṇa couple with objects of pleasure, dakṣiṇā, with vegetables and salt. If a man has bathed every day without (having applied) oil (to his body), he should give ghee and barley. If he had observed the vow of (growing) his nails and hair, he should give a place. If he had avoided (the use of) sandals, he should give sandals. On having avoided flesh, a cow with a calf is said to be given. He who has offered a lamp every day, should offer a golden lamp. And he should give that lamp with ghee to a brāhmaṇa. For the vow of (avoiding) vegetables, and for that of (avoiding) beans, he should (respectively) give vegetables and gold weighing a māṣa to a brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, if he desires fulfilment of his vow. For the vow of (avoiding) sexual unions he should give silver to a brāhmaṇa; and for that of nāgavallī (i.e. a tāmbūla), (he should give) camphor along with gold. O best brāhmaṇa, that which is from

time to time done for the vow should especially be given with a desire to go to heaven to a brāhmaṇa. Having first bathed, he should observe the vows before Viṣṇu. The god, holding a conch, a disc and a mace is without a beginning and an end. Who do not observe (a vow) before him, since Viṣṇu destroys sins?

CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

Propitiation of Yama

Nārada said:

1-4. O best god, for my well-being, tell me about the propitiation of Yama. O god, how (i.e. by doing what) a man does not go to hell? It is heard that in Yama's world there is the river Vaitaraṇī. She is unapproachable, boundless, difficult to be crossed, and contains much blood. How can she, difficult to be crossed by all beings, be easily crossed? O lord, this is just the great fear about Yama's world? O revered one, having favoured me, tell me the entire act to be free from that (fear).

Mahādeva said:

5-6. O brāhmaṇa, formerly I had bathed in the salty ocean at Dvārāvatī. O brāhmaṇa, I (there) saw a sage named Mudgala who came there. He was blazing like the sun. His body was shining with penance. Having saluted me, the sage Mudgala, being amazed, said:

Mudgala said:

7-21. O god, suddenly I fainted and fell on the ground. My limbs are burning. I am seized by Yama's servants. I, this soul of the size of the thumb, was dragged forcibly, was bound tightly by Yama's soldiers and taken near Yama. In a moment I saw in the assembly Yama of tawny eyes, of a dark face, very fierce, and possessing hundreds of fatal diseases, and waited upon in person by (the three humours in the human body viz.) wind, bile, phlegm—the (three) deficiencies—so also by

diseases like fever parching up the body, by boils and cuts etc. (He was also served by) crushing of the body with burning (sensation), head-ache, by fistula in the anus, (all) destroying the strength; by inflammation of the glands of the neck, eye-diseases, strangury, fever and sores. (He was also waited upon) by (diseases like) swooning, throat-disease, heat-disease, by goblins and thieves. Thus he was (served) by many that were fierce, terrible and of various forms. (He was served) by fiends, demons having skulls and heads in their hands in the battle as well as in hell, who were fierce and who were seated and who stood before him. (He was waited upon) by superintendents of religious affairs, so also by scribes like Citragupta, by tigers, lions and pigs, so also by serpents with locks of hair on their hoods and very difficult to catch. (He was waited upon by) scorpions, fanged beings, insects like bugs, wolves and dogs like (i.e. in the form of) spotted leprosy, herons, vultures and jackals. (So also he was waited upon) by thieves, poor beings, plagues, by female and male imps with their hair loose, and by asthmas with knitted eye-brows and crooked faces. They were of a mighty valour, were not timid, and punished the sinners. Yama, being waited upon by his attendants, shone in the assembly, as the Vyālāñjana mountain shines with fearful wild animals. Then Yama, the lord of all, said to his servants: "How have you, being confused about the name, brought this sage insted of Bhīmaka's son named Mudgala, (living) in the village of Kauṇḍinya? The life of that kṣatriya has come to an end. He should be brought. Free this one." Hearing this they went from him and again came (back to him). All those servants of Yama again said to Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama). "We who had gone there, did not see a man whose life had come to an end. O Sun's son, we, with our minds somehow confused, do not know (what to do)."

Yama said:

22-23. Generally those men who have observed the auspicious Dvādaśī and are told about the Vaitaraṇā river, are invisible to you, (my) servants. So also they who die at Ujjayinī, Prayāga, or in Yamunā, or who have offered sesamum-seeds, an elephant or gold, or cows, and (have performed) daily rites.

The messengers (i.e. the servants) said:

24-26. O brāhmaṇa, tell us fully what kind of vow it is. O god, what should be done in that vow which would please you? O best man, how is he who has observed the Dvādaśī(-vow) of the dark half and observed a fast, freed from a sin? Tell (us), in what manner the vow is to be observed. O treasure of pity, be pleased, show compassion, and tell (about it).

Śrī Mudgala said:

27. Hearing the words of the messengers, he spoke sweetly: "O messengers, I (shall) tell (you) as I have observed and seen (it)."

Yama said:

28-43. On these foremost (Dvādaśīs) falling in the dark half of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the Vaitaraṇī-vow should be duly observed, O messengers. Till the year ends, this should be certainly duly observed. Having done it, O messengers, (a man) is undoubtedly freed. The vow of a fast, pleasing Viṣṇu, should be observed. 'O great god of gods, today will be my fast.' He should, on the Dvādaśī day, devoutly worship Viṣṇu; and should pray to him, 'All that (sin) of mine, committed due to the defect of my indolent senses should be pardoned by favouring me.' Having made such a restraint, he should go to a holy place in the mid-day. Taking with him clay, cowdung, sesamum-seeds, he should duly go there. For the fulfilment of the vow he should bathe there. He should bath particularly with (the accompaniment of) the hymn *Aśvakrānte*. 'O earth, you who are trampled by horses and chariots and by Viṣṇu, remove my sin accumulated by me formerly.' When she removes the sin, he is freed from all sins. The sesamum-seeds, of the form of Viṣṇu, have sprung up in Kāśī. By means of the bath with sesamum, Viṣṇu removes all sins. 'O goddess, you are born from Viṣṇu's body. You remove great sins. You remove all sins of all. Salutation to you.' All the meritorious ones have said that bath, with the utterance of Viṣṇu's names, and by holding Tulasī-leaf, should be duly taken. Having bathed like this, and having come out, and having put on good garments, he should gratify his manes, and then worship Viṣṇu. Then he should put a jar which

is scratchless, which contains leaves, which has five gems in it, and which is perfumed with divine fragrances, which is full of water, which contains coins, and which is accompanied by a copper-vessel. O king, a man should offer a great worship to god Viṣṇu, god of gods, treasure of penance residing in it, with the full rite. He should also get fashioned an auspicious circle with clay, cowdung, etc. Or he should get it fashioned with white, washed rice, and powders of stone. He should (also) get fashioned (an image of) Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama) having limbs like hands etc.

44-54. Then having placed before it, (the representation of) the reddish river Vaitaraṇī, he should separately but duly worship it with invocation. 'I am invoking Yama, lord of gods and of a universal form. O noble Viṣṇu, come here and give your proximity. O lord, Lakṣmī's dear husband, this is water for washing your feet. You who always are engaged in going out into the universe, show me favour.' (He should touch) the feet (of the image saying) 'Salutation to Bhutidā'. (He should touch) the knees (saying 'Salutation) to Aśoka.' (He should touch) the thighs (saying) 'Salutation to Śiva.' (He should touch) the waist (saying) 'O Viśvamūrti, salutation (to you).' (He should touch) the penis (saying) 'Salutation to Kandarpa.' (He should) in the same way (touch) the testicle (saying) 'Salutation to Āditya.' (He should touch) the belly (saying) 'Salutation to Dāmodara.' (He should touch) the breasts (saying) 'Salutation to Vāsudeva.' (He should touch) the face (saying) 'Salutation to Śrīdhara.' (He should touch) the hair (saying) 'Salutation to Keśava.' (He should touch) the back (saying) 'Salutation to Śārṅgadhara'. (He should touch) the feet (saying) 'Salutation to Varada'. (He should touch) the head, (uttering) his own name (and saying) 'Salutation to you, the soul of all, and having in your hands a conch, a disc, a sword, a mace and an axe.' Thus it is told. 'Salutation to you, Matsya, Kūrma, and Varāha, Narasiṁha and Vāmana, (Paraśu-)rāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. For the destruction of the streams of all sins, I am worshipping you. My repeated salutations to you.' Having by all means meditated upon Viṣṇu with these hymns, he should worship him. 'O Dharmarāja, I salute you. Salutation to you, O Dharmarāja. Salutation to you, O lord of the Southern

direction, O you, whose vehicle is a buffalo. O Citragupta, salutation to you. Salutation to Vicitra (i.e. the lovely one) for the cessation of suffering in hell. Give me my desired objects.'

55-77. He should always salute Yama, Dharmarāja, Mṛtyu, Antaka, Vaivasvata, Kāla, and Sarvabhūtakṣaya (destroyer of all beings). (He should always salute) Vṛkodara, Citra, Vicitra, Citragupta, Nīla, and Dadhna. Thus with these twelve names the lord Dharmarāṭ should be worshipped. 'O Vaitaraṇī, very difficult to be crossed, sin-destroyer, granting all desired objects, come here, O noble one. Accept the respectful offering made by me.' The well-known river Vaitaraṇī (flows) by the fierce gates of Yama. Beings going beyond birth, death and old age (bathe) in her for emancipation. She is difficult to cross for the sinners and removes the fears of all beings. In her, beings suffering from great pangs bathe through fear. 'O Jayādevī, desiring to cross that fierce one, I repeatedly salute you.' That is the Vaitaraṇī river in which the gods live. She too is devoutly worshipped for pleasing Viṣṇu. She, to whose bank sages and men come, and who removes sins, is also worshipped in the form of a river. I shall give you (a vow) to cross her in order to be free from all sins. For religious merit I shall tell you (about) the river Vaitaraṇā. 'You are devoutly worshipped by me and also for pleasing Viṣṇu. O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Jagannātha, emancipate me from the mundane existence. Merely by means of my uttering your name, remove all my sin. I have made a great sacred thread with nine strands. Accept it, O lord of gods, and being pleased, grant my desired (objects). This is the very charming tāmbūla for you, prepared according to my capacity. O lord of gods, accept it (and) emancipate me from the ocean of the worldly existence. This is the lamp with five wicks (offered to you) for being waved before you. O you the sun (removing) the darkness of illusion, be attached (to us) and remove (our) misery. I have offered you with devotion good food, well cooked food having all the (six) flavours. O lord, accept it. By means of the hymn of twelve letters (viz, *Om namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*), and the muttering done according to the number, may the lord of Śrī be pleased with me, and grant me my desired (object). When the great ocean was churned, five cows sprang up. Repeated salutations to the cow Nandā which is among them.' Having duly worshipped the cow, and being com-

posed, one should offer the respectful offering. 'O Nandinī, O you granter of all desires, O you goddess, removing all destructive (elements), always give me good health and a long (line of) progeny. O Kapilā, worshipped by the intelligent Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, remove my sin accumulated in former (existences). May golden-horned milch-cows, like Surabhi, and those born from her, always remain, like rivers and oceans, in front of me, behind me. May they stand by me in heaven, O goddess, full of all gods, very auspicious, and loving your devotees.' Having thus worshipped he should offer the daily rite to the cow. 'May the daughters of Surabhi, pure, sin-destroying and beneficial to all, may the mothers of the three worlds accept the food offered by me. Salutation to Gaṅgadā, the auspicious one, for the destruction of all sins.'

78-85. With this hymn only the wise one should hold the mace. (Saying) 'Paṁ, salutation to Padmanābha', the very intelligent one should have the lotus. (He should say) 'Caṁ, salutation to the Cakrarūpin Viṣṇu'. Its having said to be due to the disc. 'Śaṁ, salutation to him of the form of the conch. Salutation to you, who bring about happiness.' O messengers, the having (the mark of) the conch said to be done with this hymn. The putting on (of the marks) of the four weapons is declared by the sages. This having the marks burnt (on the skin with red-hot iron on the body) for a brāhmaṇa is as obligatory as the maintenance of the sacred fire and the study of the Vedas. The brāhmaṇas who have mastered the Vedas should especially have (the marks made) by fragrant sandal or gopīcandana. By having (the marks) even a cāṇḍāla would be purified. Even if a cāṇḍāla, one who would have the vertical, soft, pleasing (sectarian) mark, would be purified, and is always respected by brāhmaṇas. When, in a house of cāṇḍālas a Tulasī (-plant) is seen, the Tulasī from there should be taken with a devoted heart.

CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN

The Importance of Gopikācandana

Maheśvara said:

1-13. That best brāhmaṇa, having heard like this from the mouth of Yama told it to me and the independent sage went (his way). O best brāhmaṇa, that house where there is gopīkā-candana is of the nature of a holy place. This has indeed been told by Viṣṇu. In the house of that brāhmaṇa where there is gopikācandana, grief and delusion do not stay. Nor is there any inauspicious (event). The ancestors of him (or them) are happy and his (or their) progeny grows in whose house gopikācandana is present day and night. The clay from Gopīpuṣkara is pure and purifies the body. By rubbing (one's body with it) physical and mental diseases that are there, perish. Therefore, it giving salvation and fulfilling desires is put on their bodies by men. The holy places and sacred places roar till that time, O brāhmaṇa, as long as gopikācandana is not seen or heard about. It should be meditated upon, it should be worshipped; it destroys dirt and sins. Merely with its touch a man becomes as pure as a god. It gives salvation and is highly purifying at the time of (one's) death. O best brāhmaṇa, what should I say? Gopīcandana gives salvation. A wise man should rub his body with the mixture of Tulaśī-wood of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, so also the clay at the root (of the tree) and gopikācandana and haricandana also. He who puts on a mark with the fluids (i.e. pastes) of gopikācandana has always visited all holy places in Jambū Dvīpa. Freed from all sins he goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu. He has also performed the Śrāddha after having gone to Gayā. So also the man who has put on (the mark with) gopīcandana, (even though) he is a drunkard, or has murdered a brāhmaṇa or a cow or a child, is freed that moment only due to having (the mark of) gopīcandana.

CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Viṣṇu's Devotees

Maheśvara said:

1-9. O Nārada, listen, I shall tell (you) the characteristic(s) of the devotees of Viṣṇu, hearing which people are freed from such sins as the murder of a brāhmaṇa. O best sage, listen. Now I shall tell you of what kind their characteristics are and what their nature is. O best sage, listen. I shall describe to you a man of that kind. Since he belongs to Viṣṇu, he is called Vaiṣṇava. Of all the castes Vaiṣṇava is said to be the greatest. A Vaiṣṇava is (born) in the family of those whose food is excellent (i.e. who eat excellent food). O brāhmaṇa, by merely seeing them, in whom forgiveness, kindness, austerities and truth reside, sin perishes like cotton. He whose mind, free from doing harm, has settled upon Viṣṇu, (so also) he who would always put on (the marks of) a conch, a disc, a mace, a lotus, so also he who would put round his neck the rosary of Tulaśī-wood, and would always put on the marks of twelve kinds, so also he who knows (the difference between) righteousness and unrighteousness is called a Vaiṣṇava. He is always engaged in (reciting) the Vedas and sacred texts and always performs sacrifices. So also the family of them is blessed, and glory is said to belong to them who repeatedly celebrate the twentyfour festivals.

10-20. In the world those devotees of Viṣṇu in whose family only (i.e. at least) one devotee of Viṣṇu is born, are most blessed. He has repeatedly emancipated that family, O brāhmaṇa. All the stocks like the oviparous, sprouting, viviparous beings should be known as having conches, discs and maces. By merely seeing him the killer of a brāhmaṇa is always purified. But, O divine sage, I shall tell you that more blessed than those are the Vaiṣṇavas seen on the earth, O great sage. Those knowing the truth should look upon them as equal to Viṣṇu. I have heard that they are undoubtedly most blessed in the world in the Kali age. He who has worshipped Viṣṇu, has worshipped all. He who has honoured Viṣṇu's devotees has given a large gift. Those who give fruits, leaves, vegetables, food or garments to Viṣṇu's devotees, are always blessed on the earth. Those who

have worshipped Viṣṇu's devotee, have worshipped all. Those who have worshipped Viṣṇu, are said to be most blessed. Merely by seeing them a man is absolved of sins. O brāhmaṇa, what is the use of telling other things repeatedly? Therefore, seeing and touching them gives joy. As is Viṣṇu so is this devotee (of him). There is no difference between them. O child, realising this, a wise man should always honour (a devotee of Viṣṇu). There is no doubt that he who feeds but one brāhmaṇa devotee of Viṣṇu, has fed a thousand brāhmaṇas.

CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

The Vow of Śravaṇa Dvādaśī

Nārada said:

1. O best god, the able ones always have fasts. O sinless one, tell me about one Dvādaśī (only) which is auspicious.

Śiva said:

2-10. The Dvādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada, along with the Śravaṇa (lunar mansion) gives everything, is auspicious, and (if) a fast (is observed on that day), it gives great fruit. Having bathed at the confluence of river(s) and fasted on Dvādaśī, a man obtains the fruit of Dvādaśī(-vow) without any effort. That Dvādaśī which is connected with (the rise of) Mercury and Śravaṇa (lunar mansion) is very great. Everything that is done on that (day) becomes inexhaustible. O Nārada, a man having bathed at the confluence of rivers when Dvādaśī is conjoined with Śravaṇa, would obtain the fruit of the gift of a cow. A wise man having placed a pitcher full of water, should put upon it a vessel, having installed (the image of) Viṣṇu in it. Then before it the wise one should offer eatables cooked in ghee. He should also devoutly give, according to his capacity, nine pitchers full of water. Having thus worshipped Viṣṇu, he should keep awake there. (Then) having got up in the spotless morning, and having worshipped Viṣṇu with flowers, incense, offerings of

eatables, fruits and very beautiful garments, he should offer him a handful of flowers and recite this hymn: 'Repeated salutations to you, O Viṣṇu, conjoined with Mercury and Śravaṇa. Destroying the stream of our sins, give us all pleasures.'

11-19. He should duly give pure food to a brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, and especially to him who knows the Purāṇas. With his mind concentrated, the best man should accomplish all this in this manner on the bank of a river. In this case also they narrate an old account which took place in this great forest. O brāhmaṇa, listen to it. Hearing it a man is freed from great grief. There was a country named Daśāraka, and to its west, O wise one, there was the Maru country, fierce due to all (kinds of) beings. The land there had the sand very much heated. There were also great serpents. (The land there) was full of trees with scanty shadow, and crowded with dead animals. (It was crowded with trees) like śamī, khadira, palāśa, karīra, and pīlu. There were fearful groups of trees full of strong thorns. It was full of men whose vitality was exhausted (i.e. who were very weak). Such region was at places seen there. Yet all beings bounded by karma lived (there). O wise one, there was neither water nor were there clouds, the receptacles of water. O brāhmaṇa, (there) best birds were seen dead, along with their thirsty young ones remaining between their wings.

20-34. Into that country—Marujāṅgala—like that, a merchant missing his caravan through (ill,) luck, entered. With his mind confused and oppressed with hunger, thirst and exhaustion, he did not know as to where a village was, where water was, or where he (himself) stood. Then he saw evil spirits with their senses overcome with hunger and thirst. They were large, wicked, fierce; were fleshless (i.e. very weak) and they were fearful to look at. He saw one (of them) looking ugly and mounted upon the shoulders of an evil spirit and surrounded by many evil spirits. It was not moving, was very fierce, and was accompanied by the sounds of evil spirits. The evil spirit also, having seen the man who had come to that fierce forest, got down from the evil spirit's shoulder and approached him. Having saluted the best merchant, it said these words: "How did you enter this very fearful region?" To it the intelligent merchant said: "I who

missed my caravan, (un-)fortunately entered this forest due to my former deeds. Thirst oppresses me, so also hunger oppresses me very much. My end has come. My words are faltering. I now do not see any remedy by means of which I would live." When this was said by him, the evil spirit said these words to the merchant: "Wait for a while after resorting to a blossomed śamī. Then being offered a hospitable reception by me you will go at will." Thus addressed, the merchant, oppressed by thirst, did like that. When it was the mid-day the evil spirit came to that region of the blossomed tree and brought down a beautiful pitcher of water, full of cold water, along with curd and rice and he himself offered it to the guest. Then merely by eating it, he was very much satisfied. And in a moment he became free from thirst and torment. Then the evil spirits came there. He gave a portion from the curd and rice (to all) one by one. The evil spirits were highly satisfied with the curd and rice along with water.

35-42a. Having gratified the guest and all the evil spirits, he himself ate at will, whatever was left of (what they had) eaten. When he was eating the good food and water were exhausted. Then the merchant said these words to the chief of the evil spirits: "This strikes me as a great wonder in this forest. Wherefrom did you secure the excellent food and drink? So also, how did you satisfy with just little food so many of these who are fleshless (i.e. weak) and have their sides broken? How is it that you have made your abode in this very fierce forest? Remove this doubt of me. I have a great curiosity (to know it)." Thus addressed by the merchant, the evil spirit spoke these words: "O sinless one, in my former birth, like me who was devoted to trade, there was no other wicked man in the entire city. Due to greed for wealth, I never gave alms to any one then. Then there was a virtuous brāhmaṇa friend of mine.

42b-54. On the twelfth day of Bhādrapada, when the Śravaṇa (a Zodiacal sign) appeared, he some time went with me to the Tāpī river to bathe. Her confluence with Candrabhāgā was holy. Candrabhāgā is the Moon's daughter, and Tāpī is the Sun's daughter. With the brāhmaṇa I got into the lukewarm water of them. Men fasted on the occasion of the Śrāvaṇa-dvādaśī, and gave pitcher of water full of the good Candrabhāgā

water to Brāhmaṇas. I also gave Viṣṇu's image, with curd and rice, with lids, with an umbrella, a pair of sandals, and a garment to principal brāhmaṇas, O very intelligent one. Then for the preservation of my wealth, I, on her bank, and in (keeping with my) vow, gave, after fasting, a charming pitcher of water. Having done that, I came home, and after some time, I expired, and due to my heresy I was reduced to the state of an evil spirit in this terrible forest like the family of snakes. On the occasion of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī, I gave a pitcher of water. The same is received by me at mid-day every day. All other brāhmaṇas who were sinful, who had sexual union with other's wives, and who had plotted against their masters, became evil spirits. Here, in this Maru region, the men were born as goblins and evil spirits; and they have become my friends here. The eternal highest soul, revered Viṣṇu is imperishable. That which is offered with reverence to him is said to be inexhaustible. Though they are repeatedly satisfied with inexhaustible food, they do not at all give up their state of evil spirits and weakness.

55-61. I, after having honoured with food a guest (like) you who have come (here), have become free from the state of an evil spirit, and will obtain the highest position (viz. salvation). But these, abandoned by me, will experience terrible suffering due to their acts in this very fearful forest. O noble one, with a desire to favour me, take down the names and their lineage which are (given by me). There is an auspicious box in your upper garment. Then reaching the Himālaya mountain, you will then obtain a treasure there. O very intelligent one, then go to Gayāśīrṣa, and perform a śrāddha." Having thus instructed the merchant as he liked, he dismissed him. He (too) being eager went away. Having reached his house first, he (then) later went to the Himālaya mountain. Then taking the treasure seen there he came (to Gayāśīrṣa). Taking one-sixth portion of it he went to Gayāśīrṣa.

62-75. The very intelligent one went to Gayā, performed a śrāddha, (so also) a śrāddha offered to the evil spirits duly and as indicated. Taking (i.e. uttering) the names and (mentioning) the families, he offered a piṇḍa to everyone. He whose śrāddha the merchant would perform by day, showed him his body in his dream and said: "O noble one, O sinless one, by your

favour I have abandoned the state of an evil spirit, and have reached the highest condition." In this way the noble-minded one having duly performed (the śrāddhas) at Gayāśīrṣa, later went, repeatedly meditating upon Viṣṇu, to his own house. The very intelligent one, in the bright fortnight of Bhādrapada when it was the occasion of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī, with all necessary things went to the confluence of the rivers. Having bathed at the confluence of the rivers, he observed the Dvādaśī fast. Then he bathed there, gave (gifts to brāhmaṇas) and worshipped Viṣṇu. Then he with a concentrated mind gave presents to a brāhmaṇa according to the manner specified in the sacred texts. Then the intelligent merchant returned. When every year the month of Bhādrapada arrived, on the occasion of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī (he bathed) at the confluence of rivers. Thus dedicating everything to Viṣṇu, he performed all (the rites). After a long time he died. He obtained a great position which is difficult to be obtained by men. Even now he being waited upon by Viṣṇu's servants, plays in Vaikuṇṭha. O brāhmaṇa, thus you observe the Dvādaśī-vow. It gives all good fortune in this world and the next. It produces good ideas, it is great, and removes all sins. He who, on the occasion of the Śravaṇa-dvādaśī observes such a vow, goes to Viṣṇu's world due to the efficacy of this vow.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

The Vow of Nadī-trirātra

Nārada said:

1. O lord of gods, O lord of the Universe, O you who give pleasures and salvation, O you greatest god, tell me (that) due to which (a man) does not experience grief.

Maheśa said:

2-10. Listen, O brāhmaṇa, I shall tell you the vow of the river observed for three nights, having observed which, men do

not go to hell. A man, having obtained (long) life, (good) health, matchless good fortune, happiness and wealth, so also inexhaustible (i.e. continuous) progeny, is honoured in heaven. When the month of Āṣāḍha comes the river is full of water. She is well-known in the Purāṇa to be constantly full of water. In the rainy season, when (the sky) is full of clouds, she should be (served) with a vow. When the river is full with all (kinds of) water, the vow intended for three nights should be carefully observed. As is liked by one*, one should see her for three days. On the bank of a water place, when the river is flooded (he should bathe); or should carry home that water in a black pitcher. O brāhmaṇa, a wise man, having gone to the river in the morning, should bathe there, if he is able to fast for three nights. If he is unable (to fast), he should fast by eating once a day. He should offer lamp regularly, and worship (Viṣṇu) in the morning and evening. Uttering the name of the great river and of Varuṇa, and placing (mentally) Viṣṇu, lying in water,

11-25. (he should say:) "Salutation to the deity, O Gaṅgā, O Gautamī; O river, O Sindhu, Kāverī, Sarasvatī, Salutation to you. Repeated salutations to Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, Pūrṇā, Mehendrasukhadā (delighting Indra), Kāśyapī, Gaṇḍakī and to river Sindhu. Salutation to (you), O Varuṇa, living in water and dear to Viṣṇu. O lord of the aquatic animals, O lord of water, always grant me well-being. Accept the respectful offering made by me. Give me the desired fruit." He should also make offering of food with pumpkin gourds, coconuts, and other auspicious fruits produced in the season. (He should say:) "Salutation to you, O Keśava, O Ananta. Salutation to you lying in water. O lord, protect me. O Govinda, grant me a boon." Thus he should, in proper order, and at proper time, worship (the deity). He being pure, and having observed the three-night vow, should break the fast after worshipping the deity and should use a vessel full of water, with fruits, flowers. O learned one, he should, along with women, children and men, with songs, musical instruments and pitchers full of river (water) and placing it at every watery place worship it with fruits and flowers.* So also with various kinds of grains and sprinklings of water. Having carefully come home laugh-

*The reading is obscure.

ing, singing and dancing, he should worship bamboo-baskets filled with seven (kinds of) grains. According to his capacity he should fill seven, five or three (baskets). Desiring his well-being, he should not drink river water for three nights. At the time of breaking the fast food to be eaten during certain holidays or days of fast should be procured. After bath is taken or worship is done the water of the river should not be used. Give pure food and eatables in three groups. So also (give) seven bamboo-baskets and seven water-pitchers also. He should eat food eaten on days of fast and without acrid or sweet taste. He should carefully avoid food with beans and ground with stone. O best brāhmaṇa, thus the vow should be observed for three years. When the three years are over, he should conclude it in this way:

26-32. O Nārada, he should give a (brāhmaṇa) couple a black cow, with a black (piece of) cloth and sesamum-seeds. Having thus given (these) to a (brāhmaṇa) couple he should also give gold (to the couple) according to his capacity. O Nārada, he should fashion golden image of Varuṇa, as the form of a river, and a fully auspicious circle (in honour) of Varuṇa. He should place there a pitcher along with presents. Having worshipped it that is placed there, he should duly and devoutly worship it and then give it to a brāhmaṇa. He should in accordance with his wealth and capacity feed the brāhmaṇas, so also his preceptor who is of respectable character and who is engaged in (the study of) all sacred texts. When this is done, the vow would be complete, O learned one. He would have unending good fortune, happiness, wealth and children. He never meets with a calamity, and is, for a long time, honoured in heaven. This (vow) was observed by wives of gods and of sages also. Formerly, the nāga-women and siddha-women had observed this vow. This vow of the Nadī-trirātra is matchless. What else do you wish to hear? He certainly always obtains good fortune and children.

CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

Viṣṇu's One Thousand Names

The sages said:

1-2. O Sūta, O good one, live long. You, of a kind heart, have told us the wonderful dialogue which took place between Nārada and Śiva.O preceptor, tell us who are listening devoutly, how the noble Nārada heard the importance of the lord's names.

Sūta said:

3-5. O best brāhmaṇas, all you sages, listen. I am telling an old account, having heard which devotion to Kṛṣṇa enhances. Once Nārada, quite calm, went to see his father to the peak of (the mountain) Meru which was resorted to by siddhas and cāraṇas. O brāhmaṇas, Nārada, the best sage, having saluted Brahmā, the lord of the worlds, who was seated there, said to him:

Nārada said:

6-8. O lord of the universe, O master, tell me how much power there is in the name of him, and of what kind is the greatness of the name of the noble one, who, the lord of the universe, is actually Nārayaṇa Hari, the highest soul, Hṛṣīkeśa, united with all beings. All foolish men, being deluded by illusion, do not at all know lord Viṣṇu in this Kali age which is worthless.

Brahmā said:

9-22. O child, please listen, how in this Kali age worship is especially to be done by reciting (his) names. The recollection of Viṣṇu, the conqueror, with an effort, is seen to purify untold sins, and it destroys sins. Knowing everything (else) to be false, a man who recites and mutters Viṣṇu's names, is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's highest position. There is no doubt that those men who always utter the two letters *Ha-ri* become free just by uttering them. All expiations consist in remembering Kṛṣṇa repeatedly. A man who

remembers Kṛṣṇa in the morning, at night and at mid-day, etc. instantly reaches Nārāyaṇa, the destroyer of sins. When just by remembering Viṣṇu all the suffering perishes, he attains salvation; he obtains heaven due to his reciting Viṣṇu's name. A man should know that it is an eternal (state for him) whose mind is (engaged) in muttering his names, sacrifices and (his) worship, and the state continues for (the periods of) fourteen Indras. What a great disparity is there between going to heaven which is characterised by returning (i.e. by rebirth), and muttering the names of Viṣṇu, the excellent seed (i.e. source) of salvation? That mouth is a great holy place where Prācī Sarasvatī filling the eddy (as it were) with the words *Namo Nārāyaṇāya* (salutation to Nārāyaṇa) appears. Therefore, the best man, by remembering Viṣṇu day and night, and with his sins in the Kali age destroyed, does not go to hell. O you of the best vow, I have told (you) the truth and the truth (only). Merely by uttering (Viṣṇu's) name a man is free from a great sin. There is no doubt that even that cāṇḍāla who mutters 'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma' has his mind purified. Or he who mutters and recites 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa', has merely by the utterance of that name, visited all holy places like Kurukṣetra, Kāśī, Gayā and Dvārikā.

23-29a. O brāhmaṇa, he who always mutters or recites 'Nṛsiṁha' with joy, abandons this world and rejoices near Viṣṇu. A devotee of Viṣṇu is freed from a great sin in the Kali age. A man obtains by repeating the names of Viṣṇu in the Kali age, what he obtains by meditation in the Kṛta age, by performing sacrifices in the Tretā age, and by worshipping Viṣṇu in the Dvāpara age. Realising this men are plunged into Viṣṇu, the soul of the world. With all their sins destroyed they go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana, so also (Paraśu-)rāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and after him is said to be (the incarnation of) Kalki. These ten are said to be (Viṣṇu's) ten incarnations on the earth. Merely by (uttering) their names, (even) the killer of a brāhmaṇa is always purified. He, by reciting, muttering, meditating upon Viṣṇu's name in any manner, is freed. There is no doubt that he would be Viṣṇu himself.

Sūta said:

29b-36a. Hearing this Nārada was greatly amazed. He then said to his father: "O best god, why is it said: 'There are thousands of gods; there are thousands of Rudras. There are hundreds of manes, so also yakṣas and kinnaras. So also goblins, evil spirits, fiends, and those that belong to the species of deities. The greatness of their name is not heard or seen, as I have heard about the greatness of Viṣṇu's name. There is no doubt that merely by uttering his name, one is freed.' O god, what is the use of visiting the holy places or wandering over the earth? By (merely) hearing the greatness of his names, one would obtain salvation. That mouth is a great holy place, that mouth is a sacred place, in which the words 'Rāma Rāma' are (found). That mouth fulfils all desires. O you of a good vow, which are the names of him (i.e. of Viṣṇu) that should be recited? O grandsire, tell me all that in detail."

Brahmā said:

36b-44. This Viṣṇu always pervades (everything), is the ancient, highest soul. He has no beginning or end. He is glorious, the soul of beings, the creator of beings. May this Viṣṇu, from whom I am born, always protect (you). This one is the death of death. He is my ancestor. He is imperishable, has lotus-like eyes, and is an intelligent, immutable (great) person. Viṣṇu always lies on Śeṣa. He has a thousand heads. He is a great lord. He occupies all beings and he, Viṣṇu, is actually of the form of the universe. This Viṣṇu is the enemy of Kaiṭabha, is the creator; (this) god is the lord of the world. O best man, I do not know his name, and (about) his family (also). O dear one, though I am the propounder of the Vedas, I never know (this). Therefore, O divine sage, go there where the lord of the universe is. O best sage, he will tell you the entire truth. He, the lord of Kailāsa, is alone the ever-prosperous person. He is the best among all the devotees of Viṣṇu. He is greater than the great. (This) lord of Umā has five faces, and he destroys all miseries. He is the lord of the universe; he is the master of everything; he always loves his devotees. O best among the gods, go there; (that best god) will tell you everything.

45-55. Hearing the words of his father, Nārada proceeded to go there, to the abode (of Śiva) on Kailāṣa, where that god, the granter of well-being, always stays, to learn the importance of Viṣṇu's names. There Nārada saw the god honoured by deities, seated on the peak of Kailāsa, the god of gods, the preceptor of the world, having five faces, ten arms, and having the trident in his hand, having a skull, having a staff with a skull at the top,[1] holding a sharp spear and a sword, holding the trident, fearful, granting boons, and having the bull (i.e. Nandin) as his vehicle, with his body (smeared) with ash, having charm due to serpents, and having the (crescent-)moon on his head, resembling a dark cloud, and having the lustre of a crore of suns, and sporting there. (Prostrating himself) like a staff he (i.e. Nārada) saluted the lord of gods. Seeing him, the great god, the best among the devotees of Viṣṇu, and with his eyes dilated due to amazement, said to the best brāhmaṇa (i.e. Nārada): "O best among divine sages, why have you come here?"

Nārada said:

O god, some time I had approached Brahmā. There I heard about the excellent greatness of Viṣṇu. It was told there to me by Brahmā, O best of gods. I heard from Brahmā's mouth how much the power of the names of him (i.e. Viṣṇu) is. Then I first asked about the thousand names of Viṣṇu. Then Brahmā said to me: "O Nārada, I do not know (them). This great Rudra knows (them). He will tell you all." Being very much amazed, I have come to you.

56-67a. In this terrible Kali age men are short-lived. They are engaged in impious acts. And they do not have faith in (Viṣṇu's) name. Similarly brāhmaṇas are heretics and always engrossed in impious acts. They are void of (i.e. do not perform) the Sandhyā (prayer), have fallen from vows, are wicked, and of dirty figures. As are the brāhmaṇas, so are also the kṣatriyas and so also vaiśyas. So also are śūdras and others, but not Viṣṇu's devotees. O lord, the śūdras are out of the fold of the twice-born in the Kali age. They do not know what is righteous, what is unrighteous, and what is beneficial and what is not.

1. Khaṭvāṅga – A club or staff with a skull at the top considered as the weapon of Śiva and carried by ascetics and yogins.

Realising this, O master, I have approached you. And I have also heard the importance of (Viṣṇu's) names from Brahmā's mouth. You are the god of all gods, and are always my lord. You are the enemy of Tripura, the universal soul and the creator, again and again. Favour me, and narrate the thousand names of Viṣṇu, which produces good fortune of men, and always produces great devotion in them. It gives Brahman (the Supreme Spirit or the Vedas) to the brāhmaṇas. It gives victory to the kṣatriyas. It gives wealth to vaiśyas and always gives happiness to śūdras. O Maheśvara, I desire to hear it from you. Among all the devotees of Keśava (i.e. Viṣṇu) you are the (most) capable. O you of a good vow, favour me, and tell it to me if it is not a secret. It is very pure. It is always full of all holy places. Therefore, I desire to hear it. O lord, O master of the universe, (please) tell it.

Hearing the words of Nārada, (Śiva) had his eyes dilated with wonder. He was horripilated while recollecting Viṣṇu's names.

The lord said:

67b-68. These thousand names of Viṣṇu are to be kept secret. Hearing these, O child, a man would never have a miserable position. Sometime in the past Pārvatī said to me:

Pārvatī said:

69-71. O lord of Kailāsa, O lord of gods, O you who are endowed with great prosperity, tell me truly what you are muttering. How is it that your body is always smeared with ash, you wear the hide (of an antelope)? How are you having matted hair? O master of the universe, O lord, tell it (to me). You are the god of all gods; you are the superintendent of all rites. You are the lord, O master of the universe, O lord of the universe, O lord of the world.

Mahādeva said:

72-75a. Thus, O brāhmaṇa, I was repeatedly asked by Pārvatī. Then I told everything especially to her. O Nārada, listen. I shall tell (you) what I told Pārvatī, and by which the

lord, giving salvation, will be undoubtedly pleased. He is actually my father, and always my brother. I am always his devotee; and he is always my lord. Therefore, I shall tell (it) to you. Listen to me who am telling (it).

Sūta said:

75b-83. O brāhmaṇas, having thus spoken to Nārada, he told him the thousand names of Viṣṇu, which he had formerly told to Pārvatī. (Thus) they are received by Nārada on the Kailāsa (mountain). Sometime, by chance, he came from Kailāsa to the very wonderful holy place called Naimiṣāraṇya. All the sages residing there, seeing Nārada, the best sage, honoured the noble Nārada. Those best brāhmaṇas, Viṣṇu's devotees, seeing Nārada to have come, had their eyes dilated due to amazement. They showered flowers on him. They offered him water for (washing) his feet, offered him respectful offering, so also waved light before him, offered him fruits and roots and prostrated on the ground like a staff. And they said: "O great sage, we are blessed, since in this region we have had your presence which is pure and which destroys sins. O lord of gods, by your favour we have heard the Purāṇas. O brāhmaṇa, in what way would all (one's) sins perish? How is salvation obtained without giving (gifts), without austerities, without (visiting) holy places, without penance and sacrifices, without (giving) gifts, without meditations, and without curbing the senses, and without (studying) the groups of sacred texts?"

Nārada said:

84. Umā, having saluted (her) dear (lord), the god of gods, the preceptor of the world, i.e. Mahādeva, seated on the peak of Kailāsa (mountain) asked him:

Pārvatī said:

85-88. O highest god, you are the omniscient great lord, revered by all. Even gods like Indra and Sūrya very much adore you. All, having worshipped you, the giver of boons, obtain desired success. You are without birth and death. You are self-born, and are all-powerful. O lord, you, having the quarters as your garment (i.e. naked), the destroyer of Madana,

what do you always meditate upon ? Why do you having matted hair and dusty with ash, practise penance? O lord of gods, what are you muttering? I have a great curiosity (to know it). If I deserve your favour, then tell me (about) that good vow.

Mahādeva said:

89-109. I have not told this to anyone. It is to be kept secret by me. But O good one, I shall tell (to you since) you are devoted (to me) and dear to me. O goddess, formerly, in the Satya-yuga all had pure minds; and knowing Viṣṇu alone to be the lord of all gods, they worshipped him (alone). O dear one, they got great prosperity in this world and in the next. They who were indeed determined, secured that position which all gods and sages suffering pain, did not obtain. Even after having heard from my mouth, gods led by Viṣṇu, did not, through Vedas and various Purāṇic doctrines, understand for certain what the truth is, or which the highest position is, as their minds were confused. O dear one, by means of gold, jewels etc. equal to their weight (given to a brāhmaṇa as a gift), by means of sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice, and by means of bathing at holy places like Vārāṇaśī or Prayāga, so also by means of offering śrāddhas to their dead ancestors at Gayā etc., by means of Vedic recitals and mutterings, severe austeritiets, restraints and checks, by means of kindness etc., by means of serving the preceptors (and elders), by means of duties of the castes and stages of life that are to be observed, so also by means of knowledge, meditation etc. duly practised during crores of existences, they do not reach Viṣṇu, the god of all gods, the supreme bliss. Even all religious men do not reach that position which those mortals who with all their thoughts and having no other course resort to that ancient 'best person' Viṣṇu, who even enjoy themselves, who do not have knowledge or detachment, who are without celibacy etc., who have given up all (other) religious acts, but who mutter only Viṣṇu's names, happily reach, O you who subdue your enemies. That Viṣṇu should always be remembered. He should never be forgotten. All sacred injunctions and prohibitions are his commandments. Nevertheless all gods like Brahmā and all innocent sages have, by means of (uttering fearlessly) Viṣṇu's names, reached the position that was

desired by them. I desiring greater than this, and being blessed, did not accept worship offered to me, but properly propitiated Viṣṇu. Then the lord of the world, to whom his devotees are dear, was actually pleased, and he, Keśava, worshipped these as his portions. He, full of pity (worshipped) deities, manes, brāhmaṇas with oblations offered to gods and dead ancestors. Since then in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile all gods like Brahmā are worshipped by the favour of the holder of the Śārṅga bow. He also said to me: "You would be superior to and more venerable than me. O Śambhu, I shall also propitiate you and will always receive a boon from you. Being born in the ages like Dvāpara and among men in the Kali age make the people averse to me with the sacred texts prepared by you. So also censure me so that the world become better and better. I shall produce this delusion which will delude people. You too, O mighty-armed Rudra, produce sacred texts that would delude people. O you of great arms, produce (the texts) that are false and spurious. Manifest thyself and keep me hidden."

110-116. Then having saluted the highest lord, I said: "How would the sin of the murder of thousand brāhmaṇas perish? Even after hundreds of crores of kalpas you cannot be forgotten. So I vied (with you). O Viṣṇu, how would I be pure? Therefore, O Govinda, tell me the expiation you desire." Then the lord, being pleased, told the truth about himself, by which, O daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, I became superior to him. Everyday I adore him with penance, I eulogise him and think of him. Viṣṇu alone is the highest one. Knowledge about him is the means of salvation. This is the verdict of the sacred texts. Anything other than that causes delusion. All that is said like: 'salvation is attained without knowledge', 'my equivalence with Viṣṇu', 'knowledge is obtained by visiting holy places', 'my superiority over Viṣṇu', or 'identity of devotees like me with Viṣṇu', leads to delusion (only and) to nothing else, O chaste lady. Due to that my greatness has become matchless, and I am honoured by the world, O Pārvatī.

Pārvatī said:

117. Then O Śaṅkara, O master, O lord of gods, tell me how I would be the ruler of all and matchless like you.

Mahādeva said:

118-139. O dear one, you have asked well. I shall tell you the principal names of lord Viṣṇu, which would bring about salvation from the three worlds. Of this hymn called *Viṣṇusahasranāma* ('the thousand names of Viṣṇu') Śrī Mahādeva is the poet; the metre is anuṣṭubh; the seed (the cause) is *Hrīṁ*; the power is *Śrīṁ*; the pin is *Klīṁ*. Its application is in the muttering of the names for the attainment of the four goals, viz. moral merit, sensual enjoyments, worldly prosperity and salvation: 'Om, we know Vāsudeva. We think of (that) supreme Brahman; so that Viṣṇu should urge us (on).' When the various assignments of (the parts of) the body, hands would be recited duly, the fruit of that is crorefold. There is no doubt about it. He (should touch his) heart (saying), 'Śrī Vāsudeva is the highest Brahman'. He (should touch his) head (saying), '(He) is the original source'. He (should touch) the tuft of hair on his head (saying), '(He) is Mahāvarāha'. He (should utter) the mystical syllable 'Hūm-Hūm' (saying), 'He is the banner (i.e. the scion) of the solar dynasty'. He (should touch) his eyes (saying), 'Infancy causing wonder to the world by means of the desired sports of Brahmā etc.' He (should touch) the astra, (saying), 'Yathārtha-khaṇḍita-aśeṣa.' Saying, "Salutation to Nārāyaṇa the noble 'man'," he should have the nyāsa everywhere. 'We think of the supreme Brahman, of a pure, good, abode. Om, hrāṁ, hrīṁ, hruṁ, hraiṁ, hroṁ, hraḥ; Klīṁ to Kṛṣṇa, to Viṣṇu. Hrīṁ to Rāma. We think of him, so that the god will urge us on. Kṣrauṁ, we know Nṛsiṁha. Śrīṁ, we think of Śrīkaṇṭha, so that Viṣṇu should prompt us. Om, we think of Devakī's son, Vāsudeva, so that that Kṛṣṇa should urge us on. Om, hrāṁ, hrīṁ, hrūṁ, hraiṁ, hrauṁ, hraḥ. Kliṁ, svāhā (i.e. offering) to Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, dear to the cowherdesses.' Reciting this hymn he should mutter (prayers in honour of) the immutable Viṣṇu, Śrinivāsa and the lord of the world. The wise one should recite the hymn (in honour) of him. Om, Vāsudeva is the highest Brahman, he is the highest soul, he is greater than the great. He is a great lustre, a great light, the great first principle, the highest position. He (is) great Śiva, the great (object) to be pondered over. He is the highest knowledge and the best recourse. He is the highest truth, the highest bliss, the highest joy and

rise. He is greater than the Invisible; he is the highest sky; he is the highest prosperity, the highest lord; he is full, immutable, admitting no alternative, and without a prop. He is unstained, free from fear, unsmeared, unrestrained. He is qualityless; he is whole; has no end; is fearless; is inconceivable; and is fit for the weak. He is beyond the scope of the senses; he is immeasurable; unlimited; he has no lord; has no desire; is immutable and indestructible. He is omniscient; omnipresent; he is everything; he gives everything; and creates everything. He is the ruler of all; he sees everything; he is adorable to all; and observes all things. He is all-powerful; has all the vigour; is the soul of all; and has faces on all sides. He stays everywhere; has all forms; is the source of all; and removes the misery of all. He has all the wealth; he is auspicious on all sides; he is the cause of all causes. He excels all; he is the head of all, is the lord of all gods. He is Ṣaḍviṁśaka (the twenty-sixth principle?); is Mahā Viṣṇu; a great secret; and a great ruler. He is always lofty; always diligent; he is always joy; he is ancient. He is the lord of illusion; the lord of abstract meditation; lord of beatitude; and self-born. He is beyond birth, death and old age. He is beyond time and has gone beyond the worldly existence. He is full. He is truth; he is of a pure and enlightened nature. He is always full of intelligence. Abstract meditation is dear to him. He can be known by abstract meditation. He alone frees (the beings) from the bonds of the worldly existence. He is the ancient soul, he is inwardly the spirit. He is Puruṣottama (highest person). He is to be known from the Upaniṣads. He is difficult to be known. He is free from the three kinds of miseries.[1] Knowledge of the Vedas is his resort. He is without a beginning. He is self-illumined and the master of himself. He can be approached by all. He is neutral. He is Oṁkāra. He is equal on all sides. He is the fourth state of the soul (i.e. Brahman). He is beyond darkness. He is the supreme soul. He has touched everything. He is beyond the scope of speech or mind. He is Saṁkarṣaṇa. He drags everything (unto him); he is death. He is fearful to all. He

1. Tāpatraya—The three kinds of torments: caused by the mind (Ādhyātmika), caused by fate (Ādhidaivika), and caused by animals (Ādhibhautika).

cannot be overcome. He has a wonderful gait. He is Mahā Rudra; he is unconquerable. He is the root cause (of the world). He is joy. He is Pradyumna. He deludes everyone. His divine power is great. He is the only place of happiness. He is desired by all. His pastimes are unending. He subjugates all beings. He is Aniruddha. He is the life of all. He is Hṛṣīkeśa. He is the lord of the mind. The guileless are dear to him. He is Brahman. He directs everything. He is the lord of the life of Brahmā. He supports all beings. He is the lord of the body. He is the soul. He is the origin. He is the lord. He is the Supreme Being. He holds all the threads (of the conduct of the universe). He is the internal soul. He has three abodes. He is the internal witness (i.e. the soul). He has three constituents (viz. sattva, rajas and tamas). He is the lord. He is known by meditating saints. He is Padmanābha (having a lotus arising from his navel). He lies on Śeṣa. He is the lord of Lakśmī.

140-155. His lotus-like feet are always served by Lakṣmī. He always has Śrī (i.e. Lakṣmī or affluence). He is the abode of Śrī. Śrī (i.e. Lakṣmī) always rests on his chest. He is the treasure of Śrī. He is Śrīdhara (i.e. possesses Śrī). He is Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu). He controls Śrī. He is steady. He gives wealth. He is Viṣṇu (literally, one who enters). He has his abode in the Milky Ocean. His chest shines with the Kaustubha (gem). He is Mādhava (the husband of Mā, i.e. Lakṣmī). He removes the afflictions of the world. On his chest is the (mark of) Śrīvatsa. He is the abode of unbounded auspicious qualities. He wears a yellow garment. He is the lord of the world. He is the father of the world. He is the kinsman of the world. He is the supporter of the world. He is the treasure of the world. He is the only one of a sparkling vigour in the world. He is not an egotist. He is full of all wonders. He has accomplished all objects. He is entertained by all. His exertion is never unfailing. Brahmā, Śiva are his excellent consciousness. He is Śiva's grand-father. He is Brahmā's father. He is the superior lord of Indra and others. He is dear to all gods. He is the image of all gods. He is excellent. He is the only resort of all gods. He is the only deity of all gods. He enjoys the sacrifice. He is the creator of the sacrifice. He is the protector of the sacrifice. He is the (chief) man (i.e. deity) of the sacrifice. He wears the garland of wood-flowers.

He is dear to brāhmaṇas. He alone honours brāhmaṇas. He is the family-deity of brāhmaṇas. He is the destroyer of the demons. He destroys all the wicked. He is the only protector of all good men. He is the only belly of the seven worlds. He is the only ornament of the seven worlds. He is the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer (of the world). He holds the disc. His bow is Śārṅga. He holds a mace. He holds a conch. He has the Nandaka (sword). He has a lotus in his hand. Garuḍa is his vehicle. His body cannot be pointed out. He is adored by all. He purifies the three worlds. His fame is endless. His virility is boundless. He is all-auspicious. He resembles crores of suns. He is unconquerable like crores of Yamas. He is the creator of the world like crores of Mayas. He is very powerful like crores of winds. He delights the world like crores of moons. He is a great god like crores of Śambhus. His loveliness is like that of crores of Cupids. He is inaccessible and a destroyer of crores of enemies. He is deep like crores of oceans. He has the appellations of crores of holy places. He is rich like crores of Kuberas. He has amorous pleasures like those of crores of Indras. He is steady like crores of Himālayas. His body contains crores of universes. He destroys sins like crores of horse-sacrifices. He is adorable like crores of sacrifices. He is the cause of satisfaction like crores of (i.e. very large quantity of) nectar. He grants desired objects like crores of desire-yielding cows. His form is of crores of Vedic lores. He is Śipiviṣṭa (i.e. is pervaded by rays). He is Śuciśravas (literally, of pure ears or hearing).

156-168. He supports the universe. His feet are like a holy place. Hearing and talking about him is meritorious. He is the first god. He is the conqueror of the world. He is the killer of Kālanemi. He is Vaikuṇṭha. His greatness is infinite. He is the great joy of the masters of abstract meditation. He is always content. He is of bright thoughts. He is fearless. He is the destroyer of Naraka. He is the only refuge of the poor and the helpless. He alone removes all calamities. He is always capable of favouring the world. He is kind. He is the resort of the good. He is the master of abstract meditation. He is ever grown. He is free from increase and decrease. He has controlled his senses. He is Viśvaretas (i.e. Brahmā). He is the lord of hundreds of the lords of created beings. His feet are worshipped by

Indra and Brahmā. His lustre surpasses that of Śiva and Brahmā. The Sun and the Moon are his eyes. He enjoys everything. He has mastered everything. He has controlled illusion. He has controlled the universe. He is Viśvaksena (i.e. he, on seeing whom even the mighty army of gods retreats and scatters away). He is the best of gods. He is the lord of all bliss. He is adorned with divine, invaluable ornaments. He is characterised by all (good) characteristics. He has destroyed the pride of all demons. He is the all-in-all of all gods, and the leader of all deities. He is the armour of all gods. He is the crest-jewel of all gods. He is the fortress of all gods. He is the adamantine (protective) cage of all that have resorted to him. He is called 'the remover of the fear of all'. He is Viṣṭaraśravas (i.e. of beautiful and efficient ears). He is the supreme ruler. He is the end of the good of all. He has killed (his) enemies. He gives (one) a position in heaven. He is the lord of the life of all deities. He appoints the brāhmaṇas etc. His life is longer by a parārdha than that of Brahmā and Śiva. He is older than Brahmā. He is a child. He is the supreme Being. He is Virāṭ (i.e. the first progeny of Brahmā). He is dependent on his devotees. He is fit to be praised. He accomplishes the object of (i.e. to be had by means of) a hymn. He obliges others. He knows what is fit to be done. He has always given up acts for his self-interest. He is always glad. He is always auspicious. He is always calm. He is always propitious. He is always dear. He is always content. He is always nourished. He is always adored.

169-188. He is always pure. He is the best among those that purify. He is (to be) concealed by the Vedas. He is Vṛṣākapi. He has a thousand names. He is the three yugas. He has four forms. He has four arms. He is the lord of the past, future and present. He is the ancestor of great men. He is Nārāyaṇa (i.e. having the water as his abode). His hair is like the muñja grass. He has spread out by means of all abstract meditation. He is the essence of the Vedas. He is the essence of sacrifices. He is the essence of Sāmans. He is the treasure of penance. He is a Sādhya (i.e. a celestial being). He is the highest. He is an ancient sage. He is solely devoted to steadiness and calmness. He is the destroyer of Śiva's trident. He is the only giver of boons to Śiva. He is the 'man'. He is Kṛṣṇa. He is Hari. He is delighted in righteousness. Righteousness is his life. He is the

first agent. He is all-truth. He removes the pride of all women-gems. He has conquered Madana for all the three times. He is the chief of the sages who produced Urvaśī. He is the first poet. He is Hayagrīva. He is the lord of all the masters of speech. He is full of all gods, Brahmā, and Guru, and the lord of the goddess of speech. He is the source of endless lores. He is the destroyer of the root-ignorance. He knows and gives everything. He destroys the dullness of the world. He is the killer of (the demon) Madhu. He is the master of many crores of hymns. He alone has mastered the Vedas. He is the first learned (being). He is the author of the Vedas. He is the soul of the Vedas. He is the ocean of the holy texts. He has snatched the Vedas (from the demons) for Brahmā. He is the land of birth (i.e. the source) of all worldly knowledge. He is the king of lores. He is the form of knowledge. He is the ocean of knowledge. His intelligence is uninterrupted. He is the fish-god (i.e. the Matsyāvatāra). He has large horns. Being the seed of the world, he looks out. He has easily occupied the entire ocean. He is the propounder of the four Vedas. He is the first tortoise (i.e. the Kūrmāvatāra). He is the prop of everything. He has made the burden of the world (as light) as grass. He has made a stream of gods immortal. He is the cause of the production of ambrosia. He is the support of the soul. He is the support of the earth. He is not a portion of the sacrifice. He holds the earth. He destroyed Hiraṇyākṣa. He is the lord of the earth. He has fashioned śrāddha etc. He removes the fear of all dead ancestors. He is the life of all the dead ancestors. He alone enjoys the oblations offered to gods and dead ancestors; and he alone gives the fruit of the oblations offered to gods and to dead ancestors. The ocean is concealed in his bristles. He has agitated the entire ocean. He is the great Boar (incarnation). He is the destroyer of those who (try to) destroy the sacrifices. He is the refuge of those who perform sacrifices. He is Śrī Nṛsiṁha (incarnation). He is a divine lion. He destroys all undesired things and miseries. He is the only hero of a wonderful might. He alone destroys (evil) forces and charms. His lustre is unbearable (even) to Brahmā etc. He, the foremost in ending a yuga, is extremely fearful. His nails are (sharper) than crores of thunderbolts. He has a form which is unbearable for the world to see. He is the lord of

the group of the great(divine) mothers. He is endowed with inconceivable and unfailing power. He is the destroyer of all demons. He is the destroyer of Hiraṇyakaśipu. He is Death. He is the lord of Saṁkarṣaṇī. He is unbearable even for Yama's vehicle. He destroys all fears. He puts an end to all obstacles. He is the giver (of all kinds) of prosperity. He fulfils all (desires). He is the destroyer of all sins. He is called Siddhimantrādhika (i.e. superior to a hymn giving prosperity). He is the lord of Bhairava (i.e. Śiva). He removes the affliction of Śiva. He is inaccessible to crores of Deaths. He is called Daityagarbhasrāvin (i.e. one tearing asunder the demon-embryos). He roars like the bursting universe.

189-198. He protects everyone that just remembers him. He has a wonderful form. He is great Viṣṇu. He has a body with celibacy as the head. He is the ornament of the upper part of the bodies of the regents of the quarters. He has a string of twelve suns on his head. His anklet is just one head of Rudra. He is the protector of Pārvatī possessed by the Yoginīs (her attendants). He threatens Bhairava. He is the lord of the host of heroes. He is very fierce. He is the enemy of the ecliptic[1]. He is the death of Śambara. He is lord of anger. He is the devourer of the wicked (troubling) the retinue of Rudra and Caṇḍī. He is not (at all) agitated by any one. He is the death of death. He keeps off Kāla, the Death. He destroys all incurable diseases. He softens all evil Planets. He destroys the pride of crores of the chiefs of (Śiva's) attendants. He is unbearable to every Indra. He is difficult to be looked at by gods and demons. He is terrible, causing fear to the world. He protects (beings) from all miseries. He devours the devourer of the world. He is Śiva. He is the cat in the form of the sky, the devourer of the rat in the form of Kāla (Time or Death). His staff-like arms hold endless weapons. He is Nṛsiṁha. He is the conqueror of Vīrabhadra. He is the lord of the secret bevy of witches. He is the eater of the flesh of Indra's enemy. He is Rudra. He is Nārāyaṇa. He is the vechicle of Śaṅkara in the form of a goat. He is the protector of Śiva in the form of a goat. He enjoys a thousand wicked powers.

1. Apama—ecliptic (the sun's apparent orbit).

He is dear to Tulasī (or Tulasī is dear to him). He is a hero. He is the giver of all desired objects to the Vāmācāra (devotees of Śiva). He is Mahāśiva. He has Śivā (i.e. Pārvatī) mounted upon him. He is having a bird. He is the master of the disc. He gives a divine and attractive form to Indra. He gives good fortune to Pārvatī. He is the treasure of illusion. He removes the fear due to illusion. He is full of the lustre of Brahman (or of Vedas). He is full of the glory of Brahman (or of Vedas). He is full of triad (of the Vedas).

199-212. He is Subrahmaṇya. He is Vāmana, the destroyer of Bali. He is Upendra, the remover of Diti's grief. He is the King. He is Viṣṇu. He is the ornament of Kaśyapa's family. He is the giver of his kingdom to Bali. He is the giver of food to all gods and brāhmaṇas. He is Acyuta (i.e. Imperishable). His strides are wide. The holy places are at his feet. He stays at Tripada (i.e. in heaven). He is Trivikrama (i.e. Viṣṇu in his dwarf incarnation). His feet are in the sky. He has purified the three worlds with the water (flowing) from his feet. His feet are fit to be saluted by Brahmā, Śiva etc. He runs quickly with the feet of Dharma. His expanse is inconceivable and wonderful. He is a very strong universal tree. He has cut the upper part of Rāhu's head. He took off the head of Bhṛgu's wife. He is afraid of sins. He is always meritorious. He always cuts off the hope of the demons. He has fulfilled the desires of all gods. He has descended (i.e. has had his incarnations) only for the (good of) the universe. He has always concealed his soul by means of his illusion. He is always the desire-yielding gem for his devotees. He, the sinless one and the giver of boons, has given kingdoms to kings like Kārtavīrya. His unlimited acts are fit to be praised by all. He is Dattātreya. He is the lord of sages. He is always in close contact with the highest power. He delights in abstract meditation. He is always furious. He has removed the lustre of all the enemies of Indra. He drinks the best nectar. He is the gem of an embryo of Anasūyā. He gives enjoyments and salvation. He is the sun to the family of Jamadagni. He produced wonderful power in Reṇukā. He is unstained by (the sin of) matricide. He is the conqueror of Skanda. He gives a kingdom (even) to a brāhmaṇa. He puts an end to all bodies. He destroys the pride of heroes. He is the conqueror of Kārtavīrya.

He is the giver of (the earth consisting) of seven islands. He gives glory to Śiva's worshipper. He is Bhīma. He is Paraśurāma. He is a good preceptor and the enjoyer of everything. He is the encyclopedia of all auspicious knowledge. He is Bhīṣmācārya. He is Agni's deity. He is the preceptor of Droṇācārya. He has a bow that conquers the universe. He is the conqueror of Yama. He is a matchless form of penance. The present of (i.e. received by) him is celibacy only. He is the greatest Manu. He is a bridge for the good (to cross the mundane existence). He is great. He is a bull. He is Virāṭ. He is the first King. He is the father of the earth. He is the only one who has milked (i.e. taken) out all gems. He is great. He is exceptionally diligent from the beginning of his existence. He is Speech. He is Wealth. He is Fame. He is self-chosen. He gives courage to the world. He is the greatest among the sovereign emperors. He holds a unique weapon.

213-218. He is to be secured by sages like Sanaka and increases devotion for the lord. He is the author of the duties of the castes and the stages of life. He is a speaker. He is a propounder. He is the banner (i.e. the scion) of the solar dynasty i.e. Rāma, a descendant of Raghu, and the ocean of virtues, (so also) the descendant of Kakutstha, the king of heroes (or the heroic king), the king, and the leader in the kingly duties. He always has an independent abode. He accepts all auspicious things. He sees only auspicious things. He is a gem among men. He is the sea. He is the superintendent of Dharma. He is a great treasure. He is the abode of all the greatest. He has the vitality of the host of the truths of all sacred texts. The world is under his control. He is Daśaratha's son. He is a king, the resort of all gems. He has produced all modes of conduct. He observes all ways of conduct. He destroys all sins. He is superior to Indra. He is beyond metaphysical and profane knowledge. He is the ocean of forgiveness. He is liked by all excellent, eminent people. He is not perturbed by joy or sorrow. He gave up his empire at the behest of his father. He is not afraid of the rise of his rivals. He gave wealth to the country of Guha. He wears matted hair in emulation of Śiva. He got the mountain of gems from Citrakūṭa. He is the lord of the world. He moves in the forest.

219-228. He performs a sacrifice as he likes. All his missiles

are infallible. He destroyed the eyes of the son of the lord of gods. He is the lunar month of Pauṣa[1] having the days like Brahmā and Indra. He is the killer of Mārīca, and the destroyer of Virādha. He purified the entire Daṇḍakāraṇya that was harmed by the curse of Brahmā. He alone is the holder of the only arrow that killed fourteen thousand fierce demons. He is the enemy of Khara. He is the killer of Triśiras. He is the killer of Dūṣaṇa. He is Janārdana. He performed the last ceremonies of Jaṭāyus, and helped him obtain heaven. He is the king of the hymn which is the all-in-all of Agastya. He scattered away the great heap of the bones of Dundubhi with the end of his sportive bow. He destroyed the demon in the nether world dragging and striking him with a saptatāla (tree). He is the giver of the kingdom to Sugrīva. He grants fearlessness with a large mind. He takes up the form of all the monkeys with Hanūmat and Rudra as the chief lords. He agitated the ocean with one arrow, along with the serpents and the demons. He dried and parched the ocean with the tip of just one arrow along with mlecchas. Formerly he built a wonderful bridge over the sea. He is the treasure of glory. He accomplishes what is impossible to be accomplished. He is dexterous in pulling upwards Laṅkā along with its root. He cut off the family of Rāvaṇa, haughty due to a curse, and a cause of poignant grief to the world. He killed Rāvaṇa's son. He cut off (i.e. killed) Prahasta. He pierced (i.e. killed) Kumbhakarṇa. He is the killer of the pierced ones. He is the only one to cut off Rāvaṇa's head. He has given a kingdom free from fear to Indra. He cuts off (the difference between) what is heavenly and unheavenly. He removes the non-Indra-hood of Indra. He removes the godhead of the demons. He destroys unrighteousness. He is praised by many. He, the enemy of Rāvaṇa, gave the kingdom (of Laṅkā) to Bibhīṣaṇa by means of just being saluted.

229-243. He brought back to life his entire army that was dead by the shower of nectar. He is the only supporter, just by (means of) his name (being uttered), of gods and brāhmaṇas. He is honoured by all gods. He loves Satī offered by the host of

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1. Taiṣī—The lunar month of Pauṣa.

Brahmā, Sūrya, Indra, Rudra etc. He is the all-ruler of the kingdom of Ayodhyā. He is charming to all the beings. He favours and punishes like a master. He loves only the good whether low or high. He shows (ways of) justice to those who belong to his side and others. He accomplishes more with a small object. He is the protector of him who behaved improperly under the pretext of a hunter. He does all equal (i.e. impartial) things. He is a free soul due to the superiority of Pārvatī. He is not abandoned by his dear ones. He is the conqueror of Madana's enemy. He is actually the father of Indra etc. in the guise of Kuśa and Lava. He is never conquered. He is the lord of Kośala. His arms are like those of a hero. He abandoned his brothers for truth. He shook the bright globe of the earth by taking an aim with his arrow. He made the deities possessed of a guardian by his proximity desired by Brahmā and others. He has the host of all beings like the cāṇḍālas, who have reached Brahmā's world. He himself led donkeys and horses. For a long time he protected Ayodhyā. He is Sumitrā's son, Lakṣmaṇa, who was accompanied by Rāma and who killed Indrajit. He (i.e. Bharata) a devotee of Viṣṇu, was delighted with the kingdom on getting the sandals of Rāma's feet. He is Bharata who killed a crore of the unbearable gandharvas. He is Śatrughna, the destroyer of Lavaṇa. He is the lord of physicians. He is the master of the herbs (mentioned) in Āyurveda. He always has the rays of nectar (or he always produces nectar). He is Dnanvantari. He is sacrifice. He uplifts the world. He kills Sūrya's enemy. He supports the gods. He is the lord of Dakṣiṇā (south, or the fee given to a brāhmaṇa). He is dear to brāhmaṇas. With his head cut, he is the sun, the lord of those who give good fortune. He gives everything. His form is unhurt, though with the head cut off with a missile(?). He is the fire of the name of Vājapeya etc. He is intent upon following the practices laid down in the Veda. He is the lord of the Śveta Dvīpa. He is the propounder of the Sāṁkhya (system). He is the lord of all accomplishments. He has destroyed the darkness of delusion by the knowledge manifested in the universe. He is the son of Devahūti. He is Siddha. He is Kapila and the son of Kardama. He is the master of abstract meditation. He reduced to ash Sagara's sons, due to his meditation being disturbed (by them). He is Dharma. He is

the lord of virtue. He is the lord of Surabhi. He is meditated upon by a pure soul. He is Śiva. He obtained stability only after burning Tripura, and carries the chariot of the universe. He is won over by his devotee Śambhu. He is like a well of nectar to the demons. He is penance.

244-264. He is the universe with the great deluge, and the second king of all serpents. He is god Śeṣa. He has a thousand eyes. He has a thousand mouths, heads and arms. He has joined with the drop-like gems of his hood the ocean, the clouds and the earth. He produces death like fire and Rudra. He has a pestle as his missile. He has a plough as his weapon. He has put on dark-blue garments. He looks charming with the spirituous liquor. He removes the blemishes of the speech and the body. He is discontent. He knocked down Rāvaṇa by merely casting a glance at him. He restrained Bali. He is fierce. He is Balarāma. He is the killer of Pralamba. He is the killer of Muṣṭika. He is the killer of Dvivida. He is Bala(-rāma) who dragged Yamunā. He is the husband of Revatī. Due to the lassitude in former devotion he is the elder brother of Acyuta (i.e. Viṣṇu). He is the son of Kaśyapa and Aditi, called Devakī and Vasudeva. He is (Kṛṣṇa) the descendant of Vṛṣṇi. He is the greatest among the Sātvatas. He is Śauri. He is the perpetuator of the Yadu family. He is of the form of a man. He is the Supreme Brahman. He is Savyasācin (i.e. Arjuna). He is the giver of boons. His grace is desired by Brahmā etc. and his childhood is a wonder to the world. He killed Pūtanā. He broke Śakaṭa, Yamala and Arjuna. He is the enemy of Vātāsura. He is the killer of Keśin. He is the enemy of Dhenuka. He is the lord of cows. He is Dāmodara. He is the god of the cowherds. He is the giver of joy to Yaśodā. He crushed Kāliya. He is dear to all the cowherds and cowherdesses. He easily held the Govardhana (mountain). He is Govinda. He is a joy to Gokula. He is the destroyer of Ariṣṭa. He is the giver of salvation to the cowherdesses mad with lust. He instantly kills him who hurts the earth. He crushed Cāṇūra. He is Kaṁsa's enemy. He is the great one who put Ugrasena on the throne. He made the earth characterised by auspiciousness. He put an end to Jarāsandha's power (or army). He threw and broke Jarāsandha. He gave glory to Bhīmasena. He gave (back making it alive) Sāndīpani's child. He is the conqueror of Kālāntaka and others. He is

the emancipator of all hellish beings. He is the conqueror of crores of all kings. He is the husband of Rukmiṇī. He punished Rukmi. He killed Naraka. He is loved by all beautiful women. He is the enemy of Mura. He is Garuḍa-bannered. He, the lord of all, all alone conquered Rudra, Arka (the Sun), Maruts and others. He removed the pride of the lord of gods. He has adorned the earth with the desire-yielding trees. He is the conqueror of the crores of attendants (of Śiva) like Nandin, pierced along with Bāṇa's arms. He easily conquered Śiva. He is worshipped by Śiva only. He is the giver of victory of Arjuna from a total fall, for Indra. He has cut off the head of Kāśirāja. He is the only one who crushed Rudra's power. He, the lord of the universe, casts a favourable glance. He troubled the son of Kāśirāja. He broke the pledge of Śambhu. He is the leader who totally burnt Kāśirāja. He is the killer of the crores of the attendants of the lord of Kāśī. He honours brāhmaṇas instructing the world. He is subjugated by bevies of young women. Formerly he granted a boon to Śiva. He is the only giver of stability to Śaṅkara. He worships Śiva, his portion. He is the lord of the vow of lucky maidens. He, in the form of Kṛṣṇa, is the killer of Śiva's enemies. He has the body of Mahālakṣmī. He is the protector of Gaurī. He is the killer of Vaidala Vṛtra. His lustre alone is Mucukunda. He did a desired thing for Kālayavana. He is the lord of Yamunā. He is a brāhmaṇa's son led near and devoted.

265-278. He brought down to the earth Indra's splendour for his poor devotee Śrīdāman. He is the only one giving salvation to the wicked Śiśupāla. He is the lord of Dvārakā. He fashioned the crores of treasures at Dvārakā to be reached by (everyone up to) a cāṇḍāla. He alone gave, as he willed, salvation to his principal devotees Akrūra and Uddhava. He turned the ocean into a well of nectar while sporting (there) with children and women. He gave life to Parīkṣit who while in the womb was burnt by Brahmā's missile. He led the daughter of the brāhmaṇa devoted to him. He removed Arjuna's pride. He seized all Kauravas like Bhīṣma with a mysterious figure. He duly cut off all the divine missiles and removed Arjuna's delusion. He removed the fear of the gods and the earth under the guise of a curse to be conceived. He is the enemy of old age and physical diseases, and gives a good condition (to his devotee).

He gives everything that is desired merely when he is remembered. He is god Madana, the lord of Rati. He is Manmatha, and the destroyer of Śambara. He is bodyless (i.e. Madana). He conquered Gaurī's lord (i.e. Śiva). He is the husband of Rati, and is always desired. His arrows are made of flowers. He is Smara (i.e. Madana) who vanquishes everyone. He is dear to Kāmeśvarī (i.e. Rati). He is Uṣā's lord. He is Viśvaketu (i.e. Aniruddha). He is proud everywhere. He is a superior 'man'. He has four souls. He has four modes. He is the author of the four ages. He is the only universal soul of all the four Vedas. He is in crores the portion of everything that is excellent. He is the ancient sage Vyāsa, the author of a thousand branches (Vedic knowledge). He is the creator (i.e. the author) of the Mahābhārata. He is the lord of poets. He is Bādarāyaṇa. He is Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana (i.e. Vyāsa) who is the only teacher of all the (four) goals (of human life). He is the author of the Vedānta. He alone has manifested Brahman. He is the cause of the Puru race. He is Buddha (literally, enlightened). He has won over through meditation the god of all gods. He is without a weapon. He has conquered the world. He is Śrīdhara. He deludes the wicked. He has outcast the demons from the Vedic (fold). He has preserved the meaning of the Vedas and the sacred texts. He is the son of Śuddhodana (i.e. he is Buddha). He is seen and shown. He gives happiness. He is the lord of the assembly. He shows favour to all as they deserve it. He is all void. He gives all that is desired. He has four crores of various principles. He is the lord who has gone beyond intelligence. He is the lord showing the path of the Veda to the heretics. He is the preserver of the texts sacred to the heretics.

279-293. He is Kalki. He is the child of Viṣṇu's glory. He ends the Kali age. He kills all the wicked mlecchas. He has fashioned all the distinguished brāhmaṇas. He propounds the truth. He removes the prolonged hunger of gods and brāhmaṇas. He is Aśvavārādirevanta(?). He destroys the bad condition of the earth. He instantly gives unending glory to the earth. He knows all the ways of life that have perished. Due to his contact with unending gold he is the only brāhmaṇa with entire gold. He is the only ruler of the world that cannot be controlled. He is adorable to the world. He is the banner of victory. He is

the lord of the principle of soul. He is the best doer. He is Brahmā. He is (Śiva) the lord of Umā. He is the best lord. He is the first among the lords of beings. He is Marīci. He is a leader like Janaka. He is Kaśyapa. He is the chief lord of gods. He is Prahlāda, the king of demons. He is the Moon, the lord of stars. He is the Sun, best in lustre. He is Śukra, the lord of the wise. He is the chief of great sages, i.e. Bhṛgu. He is Viṣṇu, the chief among the Suns. He is Bali, and the Supreme Being. He is Vāyu. He is pure fire. He is the greatest. He is Śaṅkara, the chief of the Rudras, and the preceptor. He is the wisest one. He is the chief gandharva, Citraratha. He is the excellent Indestructible (one). He is the first caste. By means of power she is Gaurī, the first lady. He is the best blessing. He is Nārada, the chief divine sage. He is the chief Pāṇḍava, Arjuna. He is the chief discussion and discourse. He is Pavana (Wind). He is the lord of Pavana. He is Varuṇa, the lord of the aquatic animals. He is the best of the sacred places on the Gaṅgā. He plays with dice, the principal among tricks. He is food, the excellent medicine. He is Sudarśana, the best among the missiles. He is the thunderbolt, the best weapon. He is Uccaiḥśravas, the lord of horses; Airāvata, the lord of elephants. He is the lord of those having a wife like Arundhatī. He is Aśvattha, the chief among trees. He is metaphysical knowledge, the chief among the lores. He is Om, the best of the sacred texts of the Vedic hymns. He is Meru, the chief of the mountains. He is the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the first among the months. He is the best of times. He is the soul, accomplished in ancient times, of a day etc. He is Kapila. He is the master of Sāma Veda. He is Garuḍa, the first among the birds. He is the desire-yielding cow. He is the best friend, removing affliction. He is the desire-yielding gem. He is the best preceptor. He is the mother. He is the most kind father. He is the lion, the lord of beasts. He is Vāsuki, the lord of serpents, and the king, best among men. He is brāhmaṇa, the chief of the castes. He is the mind, best due to compassion. Repeated salutation (to him). These are the thousand names of Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu. It (i.e. *Viṣṇusahasranāma*) puts an end to all faults.

294-312. It very much enhances devotion. It is an inexhaustible means of the worlds like those of Brahmā, and the only

means to heaven. It is the only staircase to Viṣṇu world. It destroys all griefs. It gives all pleasures. It instantly gives the highest salvation. It fully purifies the dirt of the mind like lust and anger. It gives peace. It purifies even men with great sins. It gives all the desired fruits to all beings. It removes all obstacles. It destroys all evils. It destroys terrible pain. It destroys acute poverty. It removes the three debts. It is a secret. It gives wealth, grains and glory. It gives all affluence. It gives all (kinds of) success. It gives all kinds of auspiciousness. It gives the fruit of a crore of (visits to) holy places, sacrifices, austerities, gifts and vows. It puts an end to the dullness of the world. It is the promoter of all lores. It gives a kingdom to those who are deprived of their kingdom. It removes all the diseases of the sick persons. It gives a son to the barren women. It gives life to those whose (span of) life is diminished. It destroys the (ill effect of) being possessed by ghosts and of poison. It destroys the oppression caused by a Planet. It is auspicious. It is meritorious. It enhances (the span of) life by means of being listened to, being recited and being muttered. The religious merit of him (is as much) as all the Vedas with the Vedāṅgas, crores of hymns, the Purāṇas, sacred texts, Smṛtis (would give) when heard and recited. O dear one, if a man mutters or recites a letter, a verse or a line every day, then all one's desired objects are soon achieved. Then (what would be obtained by listening to or reciting) the entire (text)? Such certainty is not seen in all (other) acts. O good one, this is to be secretly preserved by you and is to be recited only for your own interest. It is not to be given to a non-devotee of Viṣṇu, whose mind is overcome with doubts, who lacks devotion and faith and who looks upon Viṣṇu as an ordinary (deity). It should be given to the son, to a disciple, to a friend with a desire of their good. Those of a dull intellect will not grasp it without my favour. It gives instant fruit in the Kali age. Nārada will take it to the community in (the various) kalpas, by which the misery of unfortunate persons will come to an end. In the Āryāvarta it will live with two or three devotees of Viṣṇu. There is no better abode than Viṣṇu. There is no greater penance than Viṣṇu. There is no greater religious merit than Viṣṇu. There is no hymn that does not pertain to Viṣṇu. There is no greater

truth than Viṣṇu. There is no greater sacrifice than Viṣṇu. There is no greater meditation than Viṣṇu. There is no better recourse than Viṣṇu. For him who has devotion to Viṣṇu, what is the use of many hymns, and very extensive sacred texts and thousands of Vājapeya sacrifices? Viṣṇu is full of all sacred places. The lord is full of all sacred texts. Viṣṇu is full of all sacrifices. I am telling the truth and the truth (only). I have told (you) this which is the full essence of everything up to Brahman.

Pārvatī said:

313-330. I am lucky. I am favoured. I am blessed, O lord of the world, since I heard from you this hymn, this secret which is very difficult to be secured. Oh! how very painful it is that the fools suffer in the mundane existence, when Viṣṇu, the destroyer of all miseries and the lord of gods is present (everywhere), and due to dedication to whom Śiva is seen by people to be naked, having matted hair, with his body smeared with ash and an ascetic. Which (other) god is there who is superior to (Viṣṇu) the lord of Lakṣmī and the enemy of Madhu? Which better position is there than that Viṣṇu, that principle which is every day thought of by you the lord of abstract meditation? Whom, ignoring him, do the fools, proud of their knowledge, worship? O lord, you have for a long time deprived me, that you have not manifested to me this lord, having the divine powers like you. Oh, Viṣṇu, the lord of all, the best among all excellent gods, the first preceptor of you, is looked upon as an ordinary god! The greatness of the great is that they worship those who deserve worship. Those having forgiveness ignore even those who have become their enemies without any cause. I too, in my childhood saw my father's starving subjects. Unable to nourish them due to difficulty they were supported after having propitiated Lakṣmī. Gods like you, Indra and others with kind-hearted friends and kinsmen shine, due to the subjects in whose proximity she stays. Without her where can godhead remain? Where can glory and possessions remain? All living beings live in anguish. Without her there can be no righteousness, no worldly desires, no (satisfaction of) lust. (Then) salvation too is (far) away. How can the hungry and the unfortunate ones have concentration through abstract meditation? He who controls Lakṣmī, is alone the

essence of the worldly existence, and the only leader of the entire world. Śaṅkara even abandoned her. He, the magnanimous one, is full with humility, purity, handsomeness, wealth, of uprightness and valour surpassing that of all (others). Who can equal that Viṣṇu, god of gods, without whose partial incarnation all this world gets dissolved? But the deluded ones call this to be a fault. He has no birth, no death. Nor has he any desired object to be obtained. But, O lord due to my mind attached to lust etc., due to my having been one with you, due to an error, if I am unable to recite every day these thousand names of Viṣṇu, then tell me, O bull-bannered god, that name, by which I shall get that fruit (obtained by the recital of Viṣṇu's thousand names).

Mahādeva said:

331. O you beautiful one, O you charming one, (recite) 'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma'. The thousand names are equal to that.*

CHAPTER SEVENTYTWO

Merit of Reciting the Viṣṇusahasranāma

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. O daughter of the Himālaya mountain, if brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas or śūdras recite this especially every day, they, having wealth and grains go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. By reciting a verse, half a verse, a line, or half a line a man goes to salvation (and stays there) till the universal deluge. O goddess, those best men who recite the thousand names of Viṣṇu with a special commitment, go to the imperishable position (of Viṣṇu). The wealth and the (span of) life of him who recites it once, twice or thrice (a day), increase till the (end of the regime of) fourteen Indras. He would obtain sons, grandsons, and large wealth and affluence. O you beautiful one, what is the use of repeatedly saying other things? The thousand names of Viṣṇu

*Verses like 219b, 239, 260, 261a, 264 are not sufficiently clear.

give the highest bliss. A man who has first offered him worship fully, has offered him worship (every day) for a year, when Viṣṇu is worshipped(?). There should be no distraction especially while reciting (the hymn). If a distraction is had while reciting it, (the span of) the life and wealth (of the reciter) decrease.

9-17. As many sacred places as there always are on the Jambū Dvīpa, (all) those are (present) just there (where) the thousand names of Viṣṇu (are recited). Just there is Gaṅgā. There is Yamunā. There is Veṇī; there is Godāvarī; there is Sarasvatī. (Thus) all sacred places exist there where are (recited) the thousand names of Viṣṇu. This (hymn) is very pure; it is always dear to the devotees. With the mind full of the feeling of (being Viṣṇu's) servant and with devotion it should always be called to mind. Those wise ones who recite (this hymn) called *Viṣṇusahasranāma* ('the thousand names of Viṣṇu'), reach, after being free from all sins, Viṣṇu's proximity. The (span of the) life, strength and wealth of those who every day recite it at dawn, increase. A devotee of Viṣṇu, keeping awake during the night in the Kali age, obtains salvation as long as fourteen Indras (rule). That worship offered to Viṣṇu, for Tulasī, with (the utterance of) each name of Viṣṇu, should be known to be the worship superior to a crore of sacrifices. O Pārvatī, those brāhmaṇas who recite it while going along the way, have indeed no sins of the journey. O goddess, listen, I shall tell (you) the greatness of Viṣṇu. Those best men who listen to it are meritorious and are of the form of merit.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTHREE

Rāmarakṣā Stotra

Mahādeva said:

1-12. Om, the great sage Viśvāmitra is the seer of the hymn called *Rāmarakṣā*. Śrī Rāma is the deity. The metre is anuṣṭup. Application of the muttering of this hymn (is) for pleasing Viṣṇu.

I meditate upon the imperishable Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, having lotus-like eyes, resembling atasī flower, wearing a yellow garment and infallible. May Rāma protect (my) heart. May Śrīkaṇṭha protect my throat. May the protector of the sacrifice protect my navel. May the protector of the universe protect my waist. May Daśaratha's son protect my hands. May he, of a universal form, protect my feet. May the excellent god, the lord of Sītā protect my eyes. May the universal soul protect the tuft of hair on (my) head. May he who gives desired objects, protect (my) ears. May the protector of gods protect (my) sides. May he, inaccessible to a crore of deaths, and eternal lord of the universe always protect (my) body. May he who destroys sins and propagates instruction in the world, protect (my) tongue. May Rāghava protect this. May Keśava protect (my) hair. May he, the creator of the universe and called Dattavijaya, protect (my) thighs. A man who would recite this (hymn called Rāma-)rakṣā, endowed with Rāma's power, would have a long life; would be happy, learned, and get divine wealth. (This hymn) the Rakṣā, sacred to Viṣṇu, always protects all beings. A man who would remember 'Rāma, Rāmabhadra, Rāmacandra' is free from sins and obtains eternal salvation. This (hymn) was told by Vasiṣṭha to his preceptor of the form of Viṣṇu. Then from Brahmā it came to me; and I told it to Nārada. Nārada brought it down among the good people on the earth. Those best men who, while resting at home or going along the way, recite this, enjoy religious merit.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFOUR

Merit Earned through Gifts

Mahādeva said:

1-9a. O goddess, listen. I shall explain to you righteousness (*dharma*) (the excellent way of life), hearing which a man is never born on the earth. From righteousness a man would get the triad of material welfare (*artha*), satisfaction of desires (*kāma*)

and salvation (*mokṣa*). Therefore, that learned man who would desire righteousness through penance, gifts, vows and restraints, is said to be wise. Similarly by means of sincere penance heaven is obtained. He who has come here (i.e. is born on the earth) and is free from anger and greed, would have salvation after an existence and obtains Viṣṇu's position. He becomes passionate (*rājasa*) by means of penance practised through passion (*rajas*). By means of vicious (*tāmasa*) (or ignorant) penance he becomes hard-hearted (*tāmasa*) and does cruel deeds. That is said to be the penance of the demons, giving salvation to those who are of a vicious nature. That penance which is righteous (*sāttvika*) is permanent. Even in a forest blemishes do occur in the case of the passionate one, desiring wealth etc., being controlled by (*rajas*) and ignorance (*tamas*), living in a solitary forest, and subsisting on air. Control over the five senses (practised) even at home is (also) a penance. For him who is not engaged in condemned acts and who is detached from passions, his house is a penance-grove. The householder's stage is said to be (a man's) own duty. It is very difficult to be overcome by (even) those who have restrained their senses. That best auspicious stage (of life) is affected.

9b-15. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, the householder's stage of life is said to be excellent for the wise ones by Brahmā and others. An ascetic after practising penance in a forest and being oppressed by hunger, comes to the house of a food-giver. With devotion he (i.e. the food-giver) gives him food and gets a portion (of the fruit) of his penance. There is no doubt that the man who properly follows the householder's stage, the best on the earth, enjoys human pleasures here (i.e. in this world) and goes to heaven. O goddess, how can sin come to them who always practise (the duties of) a (householder)? The householder's stage is most meritorious. A house is always like a sacred place. In this meritorious stage of a householder gifts should be especially given. In it worship of deities is practised, food is given to guests; it is the refuge of guests. Therefore, it is said to be most blessed. Those men who having resorted to a house(-holder's stage) honour brāhmaṇas, never lack in (long) life, wealth, so also sons. O beautiful lady, listen. I shall tell (you about) a gift which cleanses all great sins,

which brings about every (kind of) wealth, and which gives fruit in this world and in the next.

16-26. When an auspicious time has come, a man, after having duly worshipped his deity, and having performed his obligatory and occasional (duties), should give a gift according to his own capacity. He who having snatched another's wealth would give it to brāhmaṇas and deities, would after seeing (i.e. having gone to) hell, go to the highest position, as Śatānīka was emancipated along with his sons due to having given gifts. So also after having given (gifts) to brāhmaṇas, he will go to heaven as a result of his righteousness. The religious merit of those who have given (gifts) at holy places, has been told. O goddess, listen. I shall tell (you) in brief about the gift of wealth. (Such) a gift purifying the body was never there, nor will be there. Due to it a man becomes free from sins. There is no doubt about it. Having enjoyed pleasures, he then goes to the ancient Viṣṇu. Formerly it was narrated by Brahmā to the magnanimous Bhārgava Rāma, full of sin. During the Sun's passing through Libra and Taurus, the king was engaged in a sinful act. He indulged in killing and binding (men). He was engaged in eating what ought not to be eaten. He caused abortions and violated his preceptor's wife. These and a liar are born in bad stocks. They perform sacrifices for those for whom they should not be performed; they ask for (gifts) from the censurable ones; they are always angry; and are always engaged in troubling the good. They are destroyed through faith, and with their life condemn righteousness. They are full of sins and know that they are dead (i.e. they would soon die). Knowing this, O goddess, they should especially give gifts. On the earth many devotees of Viṣṇu practising righteousness are well-known on the earth.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFIVE

The Greatness of Gaṇḍikā

Mahādeva said:

1-11. O goddess, I shall properly tell you the greatness of Gaṇḍikā. O daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, as Gaṅgā is, so she is. Similarly many Śālagrāma stones are found there. So also her greatness is told by the best sages. There are birds, plants, insects and viviparous beings that are meritorious just on account of seeing her, O Pārvatī. That great river Gaṇḍikā rises in the north. O daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, she, being remembered again and again destroys sins. There god Nārāyaṇa, causing welfare, always exists. Those, holders of conches and discs, who live near him, have, after reaching Death, had four arms and divine forms. Sages stay there, and especially gods, Rudras, serpents, so also yakṣas. No doubt should be raised in this matter. Near it is a place of raised ground, having the form of Viṣṇu. At this place, there is an image of many forms, giving salvation. There are twentyfour species of beings there. One is of the form of a fish and another, a black figure, the giver of salvation, is said to be there at the place called Viṣṇu by the wise. There is (another figure) called Kalki and tawny (in colour), (as is) told by me. Many other figures of various shapes are also seen there. All these various figures, of different forms stand there. She is Gaṅgā. She is great. She is auspicious. She gives merit, desired objects and salvation.

12-26. In that land, Viṣṇu, accompanied by me, definitely stays even now. There is no doubt about this. A man is free merely by her touch from all sins like causing an abortion, killing a child, and especially killing a cow. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, so also (men of) other castes—all of them are freed on seeing the water of Gaṇḍikā. This (river) is holy like (the river) Veṇī—especially so for the sinners. (Even) the killer of a brāhmaṇa is freed there, what, to say about others! O Pārvatī, always, at all times I go (there). Brahmā has indeed said that this is the king of holy places. Sages have bathed and given gifts there. O beautiful lady, in Āṣāḍha, on an auspicious occasion, I go there. For a month I duly bathe there; I also continuously mutter (the

hymn) which emancipates (a being). Therefore, since I had gone to the place holy to Viṣṇu, I became a devotee of Viṣṇu. This very great holy place was formerly fashioned by Viṣṇu. It gives a good position to Viṣṇu's devotees. It is said to be very purifying. O goddess, it is always very difficult to be born as a human being in this mundane existence. The holy place on (the bank of) Gaṇḍikā is not easily accessible. To reach the place holy to Viṣṇu is (still) more difficult. Therefore, the best brāhmaṇas should go (there) in the month of Āṣāḍha. Having gone there, the best brāhmaṇas should especially put on the marks of conches, discs etc. That is said to be (a) very pure (act). The holy mark of a conch should be (put) on the left (arm), the mark of a disc should be (put) on the right arm. This is said to give salvation to brāhmaṇas. (The marks) should be carefully put on. Especially the brāhmaṇas should put on the marks of conches and discs. When the mark is put on, those men belong to Viṣṇu. O you beautiful lady, there is no other holy place like Gaṇḍakī. There is no other vow like Dvādaśī. There is no other god like Viṣṇu. (I am) repeatedly (telling this). Those best men who listen to the greatness of Gaṇḍikā, enjoy happiness in this world, and (after death) go to Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSIX

The Hymn Causing Prosperity

Mahādeva said:

1-6a. O beautiful lady, listen. I shall tell you the hymn and the rise due to that. There is no doubt that on hearing it a sinner—killer of a brāhmaṇa, is freed. The Creator told it to Nārada. I am (now) telling it to you. The self-born god of unlimited lustre had told it to him after holding his charming arm. (At the time of) obsequies one should cause (Viṣṇu) to be remembered. (He is:) the revered Nārāyaṇa, with Śrī. The god Viṣṇu has the disc as his weapon. He holds the Śārṅga (bow). He is Hṛṣīkeśa. He is the ancient Puruṣottama. He is Ajita (i.e.

unconquered). He holds a sword. He is Jiṣṇu (i.e. one desiring to conquer). He is Kṛṣṇa; he is eternal. He is the Boar having one horn. You (O god) are of the nature of the past, the future and the present. Rāghava is the immutable Brahman; is the truth and is there in the beginning and at the end. He is the great Dharma of the people. He is Viśvaksena. He has four arms.

6b-19. He is the general of the army. You (O god), are the protection. You are Viṣṇu, the lord of the world. You are the source. You are immutable. You are Upendra; you are Madhusūdana. You are Pṛṣnigarbha. You are Dhṛtarcis. You are Padmanābha. You destroy (your enemies) in a battle. Indra and great sages call you to be the refuge of those who seek your shelter. The great sages (also describe you) as the soul of the Vedas, the greatest of Ṛk and Sāman. You are the sacrifice. You are the Vaṣaṭkāra (exclamation). You are Oṁkāra. You torment your enemies. You are Śatadhanvan (literally, having a hundred bows). You are Vasu. You are the predecessor of Vasus. You are the lord of beings. You are the first creator of the three worlds. You are the self(-born) master. You are the eighth of the Rudras and the fifth of the Sādhyas. Aśvins are your ears. The Sun and the Moon are your eyes. O you who torment (your) enemies, you are seen at the end, in the beginning, and in the middle. They do not know the beginning or the end of him (i.e. of you). (They do not know) who you are. You are seen in all worlds, so also among cows and brāhmaṇas. (You are seen) in all directions, in the sky, on the mountains and in the cages. You have a thousand eyes. You possess Śrī, you have a hundred heads, you have a thousand feet. You support the beings and the earth with the mountains. You are in the (interior of) earth, in water, a great surpent with all beings. You remain supporting the three worlds, the gods, the gandharvas and the demons. O Rāma, I am your heart. Goddess Sarasvatī is your tongue. Gods are the small hair on your limbs. You have created them with your divine power. The night is said to be the closing of your eyes; and the day to be the opening of your eyes. Your body would be (i.e. is) perfection. The entire world is not without you. There is that stability in your body. You are the earth. Fire is your anger. Śeṣa, the glorious Lakṣmaṇa, is your favour. With your ancient strides

you have crossed over the three worlds. You made Indra the king (of gods). You bound (down) the great demon Bali. Having withdrawn all the worlds unto you, you the Death, have just put them in yourself.

20-28. You turn the visible and the invisible into one fierce ocean, and in no other way. You took up an excellent, great, divine body. You killed Hiraṇyakaśipu who created fear among all beings. Being of the form of one having the face of a horse you resorted to the bottom of the nether world. The great oblation was brought together, so also repeatedly the secret (*obscure*). That which is heard to be the greatest one, which is greater than the great, is said to be the highest soul. You alone are said to be the highest hymn, and the highest lustre. You are the pure oblation offered to the gods and to the manes. You are the attainment of heaven and salvation. They describe you who are beyond Prakṛti as the maintenance, the creation, and the destruction (of the world). You are sung by the Vedas to be the sacrifice, the sacrificer, the sacrificial priest reciting the prayers of Ṛgveda at a sacrifice, and the officiating priest, and to be the enjoyer of the fruits of sacrifices. Sītā is Lakṣmī. You are Viṣṇu, god Kṛṣṇa and the lord of the created beings. To kill Rāvaṇa you entered a human body. O you, best among those who uphold righteousness (*dharma*), this should be (i.e. was) done by you. O Rāma, you killed Rāvaṇa, and delighted the deities. O god, your power is infallible. Your valour is never fruitless. Rāma, seeing you is fruitful. Your praise is never fruitless.

29-42. O god, those men who on the earth are attached to you, the ancient, best 'man', will be successful and devout. Those men who will narrate this holy hymn of praise—the old account—are never defeated. How would the best men, devoted to Puruṣottama, be defeated here? O god, (except you) there is none in the world who is a distinguished giver of boons. Even he who is a great sinner should recite thrice (a day) this hymn of praise of the magnanimous Rāghava, which is the best of hymns. At the time of the sandhyā (prayer), and especially at the time of a śrāddha, this hymn should be carefully and with a devout heart, recited by the best brāhmaṇas. This is a great secret; it should never and at no place be told (to anyone). By

reciting it he would obtain salvation, and he would certainly be Viṣṇu. The best brāhmaṇas should recite this hymn first at the end of the worship of the piṇḍas. (A man doing so) would obtain the eternal (fruit of the) śrāddha. It is very pure, and gives salvation to men. He who, after having written it, would preserve it with profound meditation, has his life, wealth, and power increased day by day. The ancestors of an intelligent man who after writing it, would sometime give it to a brāhmaṇa, are free and go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. A man who mutters or recites this hymn obtains the fruit which is obtained by the recital of the four Vedas. O great goddess, the holding of a conch, disc etc. at the time of a śrāddha by brāhmaṇas proficient in the Vedas, would surely be inexhaustible. He should put round his neck a garland sacred to Viṣṇu and should have the marks of a conch, a disc etc. (on his body). Then, muttering and reciting this hymn, he should duly and devoutly perform the śrāddha. Then it becomes perfect, not otherwise. Therefore, a devout man should carefully recite it. A man obtains everything by reciting it, and gets happiness.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSEVEN

The Vow of Ṛṣipañcamī

Mahādeva said:

1-11. I asked the lord of the world about the vow best among the vows, leading to the prosperity of sons and grandsons, and giving pleasure and good fortune. Now, O beautiful lady, I shall tell it to you. Listen. This account of the excellent vow of the sages is divine. A woman in her menses, a great sinner, is necessarily freed from great sins after observing this vow. O goddess, it becomes inexhaustible to the dead ancestors, and is the means of righteousness, worldly welfare and satisfaction of sexual desires.

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

Formerly there was a brāhmaṇa named Devaśarman, of great arms, master of the Vedas, and always devoted to study. He maintained the sacred fire; he was always engaged in the six[1] duties (of a brāhmaṇa). He was well honoured by all castes; and had sons, animals and kinsmen. The wife of that chief brāhmaṇa was in her menses when the month of Bhādrapada came, and it was the fifth of the bright half. He, with his mind controlled and senses restrained, performed śrāddha of his father. At night he would invite (i.e. he invited) brāhmaṇas, giving happiness and good fortune. When it was the bright morning, he would make (ready) other vessels. He made his wife cook food in all the vessels. It had eighteen flavours, and gave delight to the manes. Then he separately gave invitations to brāhmaṇas. All the brāhmaṇas, the reciters of the Vedas came at mid-day. The best brāhmaṇa gave them respectful offering and water for washing their feet etc. Polluted by the menstrual flow he duly washed (their feet etc.) at that time. All they went into the house, and (sat) upon the seats indicated to them.

12-20. He specially offered them food with sweets. He performed the śrāddha duly and after offering the piṇḍas. He, engrossed in meditating upon his dead ancestors, gave everything to the brāhmaṇas like tāmbūla, gifts and various garments. (Then) he dismissed all the brāhmaṇas, intent on (giving) blessing. Then to his hungry relatives and kinsmen, he duly gave food at the time of the meal. When he had sat at the door of his hut at night, the brāhmaṇa's wife brought water and washed his feet; then the bitch and the bull talked to each other. (The bitch said:) "O dear one, listen to my words—as to how the daughter-in-law acted towards me. I shall tell (just) like that. I shall not tell otherwise (i.e. in a different way). Some time by chance I went into (our) son's house to protect the milk that was there. It was not seen by the daughter-in-law. The milk was drunk by a serpent; and it was seen by me. Then I drank it all. The daughter-in-law saw it. Due to that fault (of me) of touching the milk, my waist was broken for good. O lord,

1. Ṣaṭkarma—The six duties of a brāhmaṇa are: studying, teaching, sacrificing, acting as a priest at a sacrifice, giving gifts, and accepting gifts.

due to that grief, I have been miserable, My waist is broken. I do not relish food."

The bull said:

21-30. O bitch, listen. I shall tell you the cause of my misery. When this day came, my son gave food to brāhmaṇas, but did not care for me. He did not at all, at any time, give me water and grass. I, a sinner, conceived to be so, have been tied without food. O bitch, this has undoubtedly happened due to my former sin.

O goddess, at that time the words were heard by the wise son. "This is actually my father who has been an animal in my house. And undoubtedly this is actually my mother. Due to (ill) luck she became a bitch. What should I definitely do?" Thinking like this, the brāhmaṇa did not get sleep. At night he became very thoughtful and remembered the highest lord. "I have sincerely practised many righteous acts. How shall I have auspicious (things)?" Thinking like this, he again slept at night. When it was the bright morning, he went to the sages. Among them Vasiṣṭha offered him a good welcome. (Vasiṣṭha said to him:) "O best brāhmaṇa, tell the reason of your arrival." The brāhmaṇa who was thus asked, then saluted (Vasiṣṭha). "Today my existence is fruitful. My acts are fruitful today; my dead ancestors are pleased on (my) having had your sight which is difficult to be had.

31-41. I performed the śrāddha as told (in the sacred texts). I well fed the brāhmaṇas. I gave food to all members of my family. After the meals, the bitch came there and spoke (to the bull, as) we have a bull in our house. O brāhmaṇa, hear from me the words which she spoke to him. "The milk-pot in the house was polluted by a serpent. I saw it, and was undoubtedly very anxious: 'When with this milk itself, food would be cooked, then due to that food, all brāhmaṇas will die'. O lord, having thought like this, I drank (all) the milk. The daughter-in-law saw it and beat me. Due to that I becoming lame am moving. Being very grieved what do I do?" Knowing her grief, the bull said to the bitch: 'O bitch, listen. I shall tell (you) the cause of my misery. O bitch, I am actually his father in the former

existence. Today he fed brāhmaṇas, and gave them much food. But he did not place grass or water before me. Due to that grief at that time, I have become miserable.' On hearing this account, I did not get sleep during the night. O best sage, my anxiety started just then only. I am given to Vedic studies. I am proficient in Vedic rites. The two are very miserable. So thinking 'What shall I do?' I have come to you. Remove my grief."

The sage said:

42-47. O Ugrajanman, listen to what you did in the former existence. This one was the best brāhmaṇa in the auspicious city of Kuṇḍanagara. In the month of Bhādrapada, the vow of Pañcamī that fell then, was neglected by him due to the śrāddha of his father etc. On that śrāddha day, O innocent one, his wife had menstruation. She did all like giving food to the brāhmaṇas. The most sinful and wicked one did not know it and performed (the śrāddha). On the first day she is a cāṇḍāla woman; on the second the killer of a brāhmaṇa. On the third she is said to be a washerwoman, and is purified on the fourth day. Due to that sin his wife became a bitch; and O you of good vow, this one was born as a bull due to that act.

Ugrajanman said:

O you of a good vow, tell me especially that vow, gift, sacrifice or (visit to a) holy place, due to which my parents would have salvation.

The sage said:

48-62. In the bright half of Bhādrapada, there is Ṛṣipañcamī. By doing (the vow of) it the sin of the menstrual flow, perishes. It gives sons and grandsons and gives salvation to the dead ancestors. In a river (i.e. on the bank of river), or a well, a tank, or in a brāhmaṇa's house, a circle with cowdung should be fashioned. He should put a pitcher there. On it he should put a vessel which is full of grains used by the sages. So also (he should put) a sacred thread, a fruit with gold. He should also install seven (images) of sages, causing happiness and good fortune. Those who have kept the vow, should invoke all of them and worship them. He (who observes the vow) should, eating once a day, offer eatables

made from the corn used by the sages, and should eat that food (after) worshipping the sages. He should properly, very devoutly and with hymns, worship them. Then with ghee and gifts he should offer the libation. He should duly give (these) to a brāhmaṇa, (saying), 'May this please the sages'. Having listened to the account properly, having gone round (the images), he should separately offer incense, ghee, eatables of five kinds, and a respectful offering. "May the sages always abide by me. May they complete my vow. May they accept the worship offered by me. Repeated salutations to sages. May Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, so also Prācetasa, Vasiṣṭha, Marica, Ātreya accept my worship. Salutation to you." With incenses and charming lamps he should thus offer the worship. By the power of this being done the dead ancestors are at once released. O child, due to the ripening of the former acts and the power of the blemish of menstruation this was done. There is no doubt that he will get release.

For the salvation of his dead ancestors he observed the vow. They, intent upon giving him blessings, went along the path of salvation. Those best men who observe the vow of Ṛṣipañcamī, as told to the brāhmaṇa, should be known as meritorious. Those best men who observe this excellent vow of the sages, enjoy many pleasures in this world, and go to Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER SEVENTYEIGHT

The Hymn Called 'Apamārjana'

Mahādeva said:

1-2. I shall hereafter tell you about the excellent vow of the sprinkling with water, as told by Pulastya to the magnanimous Dālabhya. It destroys all faults caused by diseases. It gives auspiciousness. I shall tell it to you. Listen, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain.

Śrī Dālabhya said:

3-4. O revered one, please tell me that by which all beings

can avoid suffering from the troubles caused by poison, diseases etc; they are overcome with leprosy and (evil) Planets, and are always troubled. There are many severe diseases brought about by magic or by female deities[1] having destructive powers.

Pulastya said:

5-13. O best sage, those men who have pleased Viṣṇu with vows, fasts and restraints, will not be afflicted by diseases. Those men who have not observed an auspicious vow, have not given gifts, have not practised penance, have not visited a sacred place, have not worshipped a deity, have not given food in large quantities, are known to be afflicted by diseases and (similar) faults. He who attends upon Viṣṇu, especially obtains undoubtedly whatever he mentally desires like good health or great wealth. He does not suffer from physical or mental disease and is not afflicted by poison or a Planet. He does not have the fear of the contact of the deities having destructive powers. All his sins perish; and the Planets are always auspicious (i.e. favourable) to him. He who has pleased Viṣṇu and looks upon all beings as himself, is invincible even to gods. He has pleased Viṣṇu with a fast etc. When he (i.e. Viṣṇu) is pleased, desires of men are fully satisfied. O best sage, they are free from diseases, are happy. They enjoy pleasures. They have no enemies. Nor do they suffer from diseases and effects of magical forces. No evil act like (the evil influence of) a Planet or a disease takes place in their case. The weapons of Kṛṣṇa, like the disc etc. which are unobstructed, protect him who has waited upom Viṣṇu from all calamities.

Śrī Dālabhya said:

14-15. Tell me especially what the kind persons who see the ancient Vāsudeva in all beings, who look equally upon all, should do for the miserable persons who have not propitiated Govinda and are overcome with grief.

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1. Kṛtyā—A female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes.

Śrī Pulastya said:

16-29. O best sage, I shall tell it. Listen with an attentive mind. It removes the evils like diseases and blemishes and destroys fever etc. Having assigned (i.e. supposing that) Śrīdhara (is) in the tuft of hair on the crest of the head, and Śrīkara below it, Hṛṣīkeśa in the hair, and the highest Nārāyaṇa on the head, one should assign Viṣṇu above the ears and him who lies in the water on (i.e. to) the forehead. Having assigned the lord to the two eyebrows, and Hari between them, (having assigned) Narasiṁha to the tip of the nose, and Arṇaveśaya (i.e. he who lies in the ocean) to the ears, and the lotus-eyed one to the eyes, he should assign Bhūdhara below them. He should assign Kalkinātha to the cheeks and Vāmana to the roots of the ears. Having assigned the conch-holder to the bones on the forehead, and Govinda to the mouth, and Mukunda to the row of teeth, Vākpati to the tongue, Rāma to the chin and Vaikuṇṭha to the neck, Balaghna to the root of the arms, the destroyer of Kaṁsa to the shoulders, Aja to the two arms, and Śārṅgapāṇi to the two hands, Saṅkarṣaṇa to the thumb of the hand, Gopa to the rows of fingers, Adhokṣaja to the chest, Śrīvatsa in its middle, (he should assign) Aniruddha to the breasts, and Dāmodara to the belly, Padmanābha to the navel, and Keśava below it. (He should assign) god Dharādhara to the penis, and Gadāgraja to the anus, the wearer of yellow garments to the waist and (should assign) Madhu's enemy to the pair of thighs, the enemy of Mura to the calves of the legs, Janārdana to the pair of knees, Phaṇīśa to the ankles, and (he should assign) Trivikrama to the two feet. The wise man should assign Śrīpati to the toe, Dharaṇīdhara below it, and Viśvaksena to all the pores of the hair. Having assigned Matsya to the flesh, he should assign Kūrma to the marrow, Varāha in the fat and (should assign) Acyuta to all his bones. (He should assign) Dvijapriya (i.e. dear to the brāhmaṇas, or to whom brāhmaṇas are dear) to the marrow of the bones and flesh, Śvetapati to the semen, the sacrificial Puruṣa to the entire body and the highest soul to his soul.

30-43. Having thus made the rite of assignment, he would actually be Viṣṇu. As long as he would not talk anything, he would remain merged in Viṣṇu. He, being calm and creator of

tranquillity here, should take pure darbhas with their roots and tips, and should sprinkle all his limbs with the tips of the darbhas. A devotee of Viṣṇu especially brings about this auspicious tranquillity to a person afflicted by a disease, a Planet or poison. O brāhmaṇa, due to that all diseases are destroyed. (He should pray:) "Om, salutation to Śrī Paramārtha (i.e. the highest truth), to the magnanimous Puruṣa. (Salutation to the) formless one, and to him of many forms, to the pervader, to the Supreme Soul, to Varāha, to Narasiṁha, to Vāmana who gives happiness." Having meditated and saluted Viṣṇu, he should assign Viṣṇu's names to the parts of his body. "Having saluted the spotless one, the pure one, the one who removes bodily diseases and sins, Govinda, Padmanābha, Vāsudeva, Bhūbhṛt (i.e. the supporter of the earth), I shall utter words. Let them be successful. (Salutation to) Trivikrama, Rāma, Vaikuṇṭha, Nara, Śrī Varāha, Nṛsiṁha, (and) to the magnanimous Vāmana; to Hayagrīva, to Śubhra; O Hṛṣīkeśa, remove the inauspicious, that which torments others, that which is not beneficial, that magic which is discharged (at me). O ageless one, destroy the employment of the poisonous touch of a great disease. Salutation to Vāsudeva. Salutation to Kṛṣṇa, the holder of the sword. Salutation to Puṣkaranetra, Keśava, Ādicakrin, to you having a yellow spotless garment, O Kiñjalkavarṇāgrya. Salutation to you who has held Mahādeva on his body, so also a disc, and to cakrin. Salutation to the Trimūrtipati who held the earth on his fang. O Śrīvallabha (i.e. dear to Lakṣmī, or to whom Lakṣmī is dear), salutation to you, to the great sacrifice and (great) Varāha, O you whose ends of hair are like heated gold, and whose eyes are like burning fire. Salutation to you, O divine lion, the touch of whose nails is more (sharp) than that of the thunderbolt. O you having the characteristics of Ṛg, Yajus and Sāman, salutation to Kaśyapa, to Atihrasva.

44-65. Salutation to you, of the form of Vāmana, and going over the earth. O Varāha, destroy all miseries, the fruits of sins. O you of large fangs, destroy that fruit (of sins) O you, Nṛsiṁha, having a thunderbolt-like touch and bright tips of the teeth and nails. With your sound remove his miseries, O you destroyer of affliction, and taking up any desired form through the utterances of the Ṛg (Veda), Yajus (Veda) and Sāma (Veda). May

Janārdana pacify all his sorrows. May Govinda, having broken and cut off his agony (remove) his fever lasting for a day, two days, three days, so lasting for four days, very severe, constant fever, so also fever arising from the vitiated state of the three humours of the body, and accidental fever. (May he remove) the pain in the eyes, headache and stomachache. (May he remove) lack of breath, severe asthma, all round heat (i.e. fever), shivering, diseases of anus, nose, feet, so also leprosy and consumption. (May he remove) diseases like jaundice, so also severe urinary diseases, so also those diseases due to (the humour of) wind (in the body), cuts, boils etc. May they, wiped off by Vāsudeva, perish. (Even) by uttering the name of Viṣṇu, (may) all of them perish. May all of them, struck with Viṣṇu's disc, perish. By means of the medicine of the utterance of the names, viz. Acyuta, Ananta, Govinda, all the diseases vanish. I am telling the truth, (and) the truth (only). May Viṣṇu, when (his names are) uttered, destroy the poison which is immobile, mobile, artificial, so also that which is due to teeth, nails or from the sky (i.e. air), which is due to beings, and which is extremely unbearable. (May he destroy) the imps, the deadly demons, so also demonesses[1] attending upon Durgā, severe (disease of) white round spots[2] on the face, (divine mothers like) Revatī and Vṛddhirevatī, the imps called Vṛddhika and Mātṛ also. May the account of Viṣṇu in his childhood remove (the influence of) young imps. All the seizures (by imps etc.) of the old and of children perish that moment only when Viṣṇu is seen. Viṣṇu has his mouth fierce due to the fangs, and is fearful to the demons. Seeing him those imps especially go away. O Śrī Nṛsiṁha, O great lion, O you having a row of flames, O you of a bright face, O you bright one, destroy all the imps (etc. affecting) him. (Remove also) those diseases, great portents, enemies, great imps, and those cruel beings, severe afflictions due to Planets, the diseases in the wounds caused by weapons like diseases of the skin, so also the boils etc. and the imps etc. settled on the limbs, O you, who are the protector of the three worlds, and who ward off wicked demons. O Sudarśana of great lustre, cut off (i.e.

1. Sākinī—A kind of female being attendant on Durgā, and supposed to be a demon or fairy.
2. Maṇḍalaka—White leprosy with round spots.

destroy) the severe fever. Remove the (effect of) wind, cuts, and severe, great poison. (Remove) the very severe, undoing pain, and the flame of poison with the skin disease Om, Hāṁ, Hāṁ, Hūṁ, Hūṁ; kill the enemies with your very sharp axe.

66-84. Salutation to the revered Sudarśana, you having the body destroying miseries. (May) Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul (remove) all those other wicked (forces) which give pain to beings; salutation to you, O Vāsudeva (who has) taken up some form. O god, O excellent Acyuta, having thrown the Sudarśana disc, fearful due to rows of flames, destroy all the wicked. O you Sudarśana, great disc, O you excellent weapon of Viṣṇu, O you of a sharp edge, O you of a great speed, O you having the brilliance of a crore suns, O you Sudarśana, having great flames, and of a great sound, cut off all calamities, demons, and sins, O you fearful one. O Sudarśana, destroy sins, make (us men of) good health; in the east, in the west, south and north, may Narasiṁha, the universal soul, protect (us) with his roars. On the earth, in the atmosphere, behind (us), by (our) sides, in front of us, may Viṣṇu, of many forms, protect (us). Since it is a fact that everything consisting of gods, demons and human beings is full of (i.e. pervaded by) him, may the entire misery of this one perish. Since it is a fact that Viṣṇu, the lord of abstract meditation is sung (i.e. praised) among gods, may the entire misery of this one perish. Since it is a fact that the highest soul Viṣṇu is sung (i.e. praised) in the Vedāṅgas, may Viṣṇu, the universal soul give him happiness. May there be peace. May there be auspiciousness; may unhappiness perish, (since) I have sprinkled with darbhas springing from the body of Vāsudeva. O Govind, O you who have cleaned (everything by sending) away (the evil forces), salutation (to you). You are Viṣṇu like that. Yet all miseries perish due to utterance of Hari's (names). When Viṣṇu is remembered, all blemishes, imps (or Planets) and all poisons and ghosts are destroyed. These darbhas have sprung from Viṣṇu's body. I am Viṣṇu myself remaining in front. I have destroyed all his misery. He should be comfortable, since such are Viṣṇu's words. May there be peace, auspiciousness and happiness. Whatever[1] is his misery is thrown into the

1. *Praṇaśyatu sukham* etc. seems quite incongruous.

salty ocean. Let it perish. May he always have comfort due to the recital of (the names of) Viṣṇu. Let the sin go wherefrom it has come." A devotee of Viṣṇu, desiring the good of beings, should do this great sprinkling of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu at the time of diseases. Due to this all miseries completely vanish. For the purification of (i.e. from) all sins, the sprinkling of Viṣṇu is effective. Whatever (blemish), wet, dry, small or big, like the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc. (there is) all that quickly perishes like darkness at the appearance of the sun.

85-91. As small animals perish from the lion ('s attack), so diseases and blemishes flee away. May imps, fiends, goblins etc. perish on merely hearing the name of Viṣṇu. Those who are very greedy for money should never do it. Having done the sprinkling a man, desiring his good, should not accept (any money etc.). Those who are desireless, and who know the beginning, the middle and the end, and who are always calm, should do it. Otherwise it would not give success.

This sprinkling (in honour) of Viṣṇu is a matchless success of men, a great protection of men; it is a great weapon. It was formerly told by Brahmā to his son Pulastya. Pulastya himself told it to Dālabhya. It is publicised by Dālabhya for the good of all beings in the three worlds. The (narration of) Viṣṇu's sprinkling is over. O goddess, I have told it to you, since you are always devoted to me. A person listening to this devoutly destroys all blemishes and diseases.

CHAPTER SEVENTYNINE

The Importance of Apamārjana

Mahādeva said:

1-16. The sprinkling (called *Apamārjana*) is divine and very wonderful. It (i.e. the hymn) should be recited especially for fulfilling the desire of having a son. A wise man should recite this hymn for fulfilling all his desires. The life, wealth and

strength of those twice-borns who recite it once, twice or thrice a day, increase. A brāhmaṇa obtains knowledge; and a kṣatriya gets a kingdom. A vaiśya obtains wealth and prosperity, and a śūdra gets devotion—others also get devotion by reciting, listening to, and muttering it. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he gets the fruit (of the recital) of Sāmadeva. Just at that moment only the entire multitude of his sins perishes. O goddess, knowing this, people, being calm, should recite it. Certainly they have sons and full wealth. That devotee of Viṣṇu who, writing it on a birch-leaf, has it (on his person), goes to Viṣṇu's highest position after having enjoyed happiness in this world. He who, having recited one verse, would offer it to Tulasī, has visited all holy places on his having worshipped Tulasī. This great hymn belongs to Viṣṇu and gives salvation. Being recited it resembles the gift of land, and the person (who recites it) goes to the world of Viṣṇu. He should especially recite the hymn with a desire to go to Viṣṇu's world. Men, being composed, should recite it for the (long) life of the children. It brings about peace to the children who are overcome by diseases and imps (or Planets). Being possessed by a ghost, so also (the influence of) poison, perishes just on its recital. That brāhmaṇa who, having put a Tulasī-garland round his neck, would recite it, should be known as a devotee of Viṣṇu, and he goes to the world of Viṣṇu. That brāhmaṇa who has (on his body) the marks of a conch, a disc etc., who has the (Tulasī) garland round his neck, and who always recites this hymn, is said to be a devotee of Viṣṇu. On leaving this world he goes to Viṣṇu's world. He is free from delusion, illusion, hypocrisy and thirst (i.e. desires). A man should recite this divine hymn. He would obtain the highest bliss. Those brāhmaṇas who are known to be the devotees of Viṣṇu are blessed on the earth. There is no doubt that they have emancipated themselves with their family. They, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, are most fortunate in the world. They should always be devoted (to Viṣṇu). They are the followers of the lord (i.e. Viṣṇu).

CHAPTER EIGHTY

The Greatness of Viṣṇu

Śṛī Prāvatī said:

1. O lord of the universe, tell me the greatness of lord Viṣṇu, on hearing which greatness a man is never born again.

Mahādeva said:

2-6. O beautiful lady, I shall narrate the excellent importance of Viṣṇu. By hearing it one would obtain salvation in the end. Yudhiṣṭhira, having saluted with his head put on the ground Bhīṣma, Devavrata who was very wise, who was greatly devoted to acquiring spiritual knowledge, who was the resort of all sacred books, who had conquered his senses, and who was sinless, who, the noble one, was invincible even to gods along with Indra, who was true to his word, who had conquered anger, who was firmly settled in equanimity, who had great faith in Nārāyaṇa, the lord of the world, the refuge, to whom his devotees were dear, by means of his acts of speech, mind, and body, who was the abode of virtues, who was calm, and who was the grandsire of the Kurus, asked him this:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

7-13. Some speak about Dharma (i.e. righteousness) to be great. Some say wealth is great. Some speak approvingly of gifts. Others (recommend) exertion. Some approve of Sāṁkhya, others of the great Yoga. Some speak approvingly of knowledge; some describe the sacred texts to be great; some say detachment is excellent. Some look upon the rites like Agniṣṭoma (sacrifice) as great. Some to whom clods, stones and gold are alike, look upon the knowledge of the self as supreme. Some wise men say that curbs and restraints are great (i.e. important). Some others (say that) kindness is great. Some ascetics look upon harmlessness as supreme. Some say purity is supreme, some men say worship of deities is great. Men who are stupefied by sinful acts, are perplexed in this matter. O you who know the way of life, O you the best among those who wield weapons, please tell me

which of these is the supreme act that should be done by the noble.

Mahādeva said:

O chaste lady, for the good of the people I shall tell you that account which took place between Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira on the earth. Hearing these questions, Bhīṣma then said to Yudhiṣṭhira:

Bhīṣma said:

14. O you son of Dharma, listen to this great secret which releases (a human being) from the worldly existence. You should listen to it properly and understand it well.

15-28. In this matter only they narrate this old, auspicious dialogue that took place between Puṇḍarīka and Nārada, the great sage. Puṇḍarīka was a very intelligent brāhmaṇa endowed with (the knowledge of) scriptures. He was in the first stage of life, and was always under the control of his preceptors. He had conquered his senses, controlled his anger. He was greatly devoted to performing the sandhyā (prayers). He was proficient in the Vedas, Vedāṅgas and expert in all sacred texts. With good oblations and sacred fuel he offered oblations to fire in the evening and morning. Having properly meditated upon lord Viṣṇu, he worshipped the lord of the world. He was engaged in penance and studies actually like Brahmā's sons. With water, sacred fuel and flowers etc. he again and again worshipped his preceptor. He served his mother and father. He lived on alms. He was free from jealousy. He studied the Vedic lore. He was greatly attached to prāṇāyāma (suspension of the breath). He who was the soul of all, who had no desire for the mundane existence, who was noble, had a thought to cross over the ocean of worldly existence. Having abandoned like (blades of) grass his mother, father, brothers, friends, friendly persons, maternal uncles, relatives and kinsmen, his possession like that of Indra, rich with wealth and grains, very costly fields where crops of all kinds grew, the very wise, very happy one, eating only vegetables, roots and fruits roamed over the beautiful earth. He went to Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Gomatī, Gaṇḍikā, Śatadru,

Payoṣṇī, Sarasvatī, Prayāga, Narmadā, and the great river Śoṇa; so also to Prabhāsa, sacred places on the Vindhya and the Himālaya. He went to those hermitages that are situated in the Naimiṣa (forest) or (holy places) like Puṣkara, so also those (situated) in Kurukṣetra, and on Govardhana etc. The great contemplative saint went (to these) properly and at a proper time.

29-41. Once that noble, self-possessed, wise Puṇḍarika, led by former acts, went to Śālagrāma. It was resorted to by sages knowing the truth and having penance as their wealth. It was a charming abode of sages, and was well-known even in the Purāṇas. It is adorned with discs etc. and the stone slab is marked with a disc. It is charming, solitary, extensive; and always pleases Viṣṇu. Moreover, the beings there are marked with discs and are meritorious-looking. Exhibiting the auspicious, holy places, they move there. That (Puṇḍarīka) of a good vow bathed in the Devahrada holy place on (the bank of) Sarasvatī in that very meritorious place viz. Śālagrāma. (He also bathed) in the Jātismaryā, Cakrakuṇḍa, and places situated on Cakranadī. There were other holy places in that village only. There also he wandered. Then the mind of that noble-minded one, due to the power of the holy place and the lustre of the holy places was delighted. That Puṇḍarīka too, with his mind purified by the holy place, devoted to the path of abstract meditation and having penance as his wealth stayed there only. He, all alone, indifferent in regard to opposite pairs of feelings (pleasure or pain), with his senses curbed, eating (i.e. subsisting on) vegetables, roots and fruits, content, viewing everything equally, desiring success, worshipping Garuḍa-bannered god (i.e. Viṣṇu) with great devotion and according to the precepts as told in the sacred texts, lived there only for a long time. By means of restraints and checks, so also (various) postures, suspension of the breath, (visiting) holy places, and constantly restraining his organs, steady abstraction of his mind, contemplation, profound meditation, he, free from blemishes, always properly studied Yoga. He propitiated the lord of all with (rites told in) the Vedas, Vedāṅgas and Purāṇas, and then he obtained purity.

42-51. Free from anger and hatred, as it were being Dharma incarnate, he propitiated the lord of gods with his mind fixed on him. The lord Viṣṇu with his eyes long (i.e.broad) like lotuses

was pleased. The lord (said to) Nārada: "I am pleased with this intelligent one." Then, sometime, Nārada, resembling actually the Sun, and knowing the truth, and very lustrous, went to the lord of gods. The revered one, with his mind full of devotion for Viṣṇu, engaged in the good of Viṣṇu's devotees, desired to see Puṇḍarīka, the treasure of penance. The very intelligent and very generous one saw Nārada adorned with an orb of lustre and the only repository of all Vedas, to have come to him. With his palms joined, he, with his mind pleased, bowed down, and duly offering materials of worship, again saluted (him). 'Who is this of a wonderful form, bright, having put on a charming dress having a musical instrument in his hand, and decorated with an orb (indicating) victory? Is he the Sun, or Fire, or Indra, or Varuṇa?' Remaining thinking like this he spoke to him of great lustre.

Puṇḍarīka said:

Who are you, of a great lustre? Where from have you come? O revered sir, seeing you on the earth is generally very difficult. O Lord, I have never seen a man like you. O sinless one, please tell fully (about) what I have indicated.

Nārada said:

52-55. I am Nārada. Always curious to see a powerful devotee of Viṣṇu like you I have come (here), O brāhmaṇa. The lord's devotee, an excellent brāhmaṇa, or even a cāṇḍāla, purifies (one) if he is remembered, gratified or worshipped by chance. I am the servant of Vāsudeva, the god of gods, the holder of the Śārṅga (bow), having in his hands a conch, a disc, a mace, and the only eye of the three worlds.

Thus addressed by Nārada, with his mind full of devotion, he, very much amazed at his sight, spoke sweetly to the brāhmaṇa.

Puṇḍarīka said:

56-62. I am (most) fortunate among the human beings; I am fit to be very much honoured even by gods. My dead ancestors are happy. Today I have got the fruit of my existence.

O divine sage, especially favour me, your devotee. O learned one, wandering (everywhere), I shall, with my acts, do (what you tell me). Please advise me about the great secret (act) fit to be done by me. You are the asylum of all the beings—especially of Viṣṇu's followers.

Nārada said:

O brāhmaṇa, here (i.e. in this world) there are many sacred texts and many acts. There are many kinds of duties (of men), so also are many minds. O best brāhmaṇa, the diversity in the world is due to that only. Otherwise all beings have either pleasure or pain. Some have understood the world to be just of the nature of intelligence, momentary, having no soul, and not depending upon external objects. Others say that this world springs from the Unmanifest, the eternal one; is eternal and merges into him only.

63-71. The souls are said to be many, eternal and omnipresent. (So say) others, the best among the intelligent, and always greatly devoted to observing it. Others think that the soul lasts as long as the body (lasts). Even in the body of an elephant or an insect the great primordial Brahman exists. Some say, the world will exist at other times as it exists today. This is an eternal stream. Who is the Creator? Others who have conquered their minds say: "That which is perceived by the senses does not exist. Whence can there be heaven etc.?" Some say this (world) has no controller. Others say it has. (Thus) averse to the truth there are extremely varied opinions. In the same way, other cheats, presenting their own logic, according to their intelligence and knowledge, speak with (i.e. about) many differences. O you treasure of penance, being attentive to logic, I shall tell you the meritorious truth, destroying the fierce mundane existence. The gods and men know its source. They are known through a proof. The deluded ones do not (know) the proof. They have not, in accordance with their capacity, understood the future, the past, the very remote, and that which is settled (i.e. dependent) upon the present objects.

72-77. The sages have explained the sacred texts, as they have come down in order in the former form. Those (texts) accomplishing the highest truth should be known as an authority.

O best brāhmaṇa, that knowledge which, removing blemishes like anger and hatred, springs from the power of study is called *Sacred Scripture.* Fruit, action and truth are knowledge, vision and the soul. The characteristic of other sacred texts is that it is without the concept of origin etc. It is the eternal ancient feeling of the self and is beyond the cognizance (i.e. reach) of the senses. It is just intelligence, and should be known as immortal, unending, unborn and immutable, spotless, that has manifested itself and has remained in a manifest and an unmanifest form. It is known to be pervaded by Viṣṇu, and is (also) known to remain separate from him. It is reflected upon by the meditating saints, is not known by those averse to the truth; it is noticed to be different from the minds, separate and so not existing in the soul. O child, O you innocent one and of a good vow, listen. I shall tell you who have asked me what Brahmā formerly said.

78-80. O child, O you innocent one and of a good vow, listen. I shall tell you who have asked me what Brahmā formerly said. Once having duly saluted Brahmā, the grandsire, staying in his world I asked the unborn and the immutable one: "O grandsire Brahman, tell me properly what is said to be the highest knowledge, and what is thought to be the highest Yoga."

Brahmā said:

81-87. O dear one, listen attentively to the acquisition of true knowledge, ample significance of which has sprung up from a few treatises, and the act of adoration of which involves no trouble. It is told by him that the twentyfifth (principle) traditionally described as *Puruṣa* is the soul of all beings. He is Viṣṇu, the resort of the world, the highest, ancient soul. He is engaged in the creation, destruction and maintenance of the world. The ancient one is the supreme god of the three souls. O brāhmaṇa, he should always be propitiated. They (who propitiate) the lord of the world (alone) see him as the support of the world, and after some time as the past, the future, the great and so also separated (from the world). With the eye of knowledge they see him to be gross, subtle, and different. Their mind is fixed on him. Their life has gone to him, and they are highly devoted to Viṣṇu. To those who are dull of intellect, who are wicked, who are

vicious due to their knowledge (based on) wrong logic, who say he is separated from the senses, he appears differently.

Nārada said:

88-89. O sinless one, listen also to something else being told by me. It was formerly told by Brahmā, the lord of the world, himself. Brahmā told about their welfare to gods led by Indra, and to sages who had asked him, O you of a good vow.

Brahmā said:

90-98. Dharma is solely devoted to Viṣṇu. The eternal worlds, sacrifices, so also the various sacred texts are solely devoted to him. So also the Vedas with the Vedāṅgas and other (texts). O wise ones, Viṣṇu, Hari is the lord of the universe. There are the five elements like the earth, and he is immutable. The wise should know the entire world to be full of Viṣṇu. Yet sinful men who are deluded, do not realise that the entire mobile and immobile world is full of his illusion only. (But) he who has his mind fixed on him, his life gone to him, and knowing the truth, realises (this). Viṣṇu, the guardian of the three worlds, is the lord of all beings. In him all this world dwells and (from) him it springs up also. Rudra destroys the world. While maintaining the world he is called Viṣṇu. I am in (i.e. look after) the creation. So also there are other regents of the worlds. He is the support of all. He has no (i.e. he does not require any) support. He is full and without parts. He is subtle and gross. He is higher than the highest—the other one. Submit only to him, doing all the work of annihilation. That Viṣṇu is delared to be our father and procreator.

All gods, thus addressed by Brahmā having the lotus as his source, saluted god Viṣṇu, Janārdana, the lord of all worlds.

99-116. Therefore, O you brāhmaṇa sage, you too become greatly devoted to Viṣṇu. Who else but he, very generous one, would, when solicited, give (to him who solicits)? Accept that Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, the god of gods, only as the father and the mother. One should everyday carefully please the preceptor, the lord of gods with a sacrifice, or with austerities or with study. Inexhaustible pleasures should be had in heaven.

(For that) O brāhmaṇa sage, accept that Puruṣottama only. For him what is the use of many hymns? What is the use of many vows for him? The hymn *Om Namo Narāyaṇāya* ('Om, salutation to Nārāyaṇa') accomplishes all (desired) objects. A man may put on rags. He may have matted hair. He may have a staff. He may be clean-shaved, O brāhmaṇa. Or O best brāhmaṇa, he may be adorned. No distinguishing mark is the cause of (i.e. represents particular) way of life. Even those who are always cruel, wicked or given to sinful acts, go, on being greatly devoted to Viṣṇu, to the highest position. And Viṣṇu's devotees, free from sins, are not smeared with streams of sins. They, with their minds conquered with harmlessness, purify the entire world. A king known as Kṣatrabandhu, who harmed beings, reached, from Keśava's abode the highest place of Viṣṇu. A very energetic king, Ambarīṣa, knower of the highest truth, obtained Viṣṇu's position after propitiating Viṣṇu. Many other brāhmaṇic sages, calm, and with their vows fulfilled, obtain great success after meditating upon the highest soul. Prahlāda, the great joy, formerly waited upon, worshipped and meditated upon Nārāyaṇa Hari, and was protected by him only. A bright and very religious king named Bharata, having waited upon him for a long time, obtained highest salvation. A celibate, a householder, a recluse or a mendicant, does not at all reach the highest position without propitiating Viṣṇu. He who has, during many existences, a thought like this: 'I am the servant of Viṣṇu's devotees', has all his desired objects obtained, and such a man obtains residence in Viṣṇu's heaven. There is no doubt about this. Then what about those whose life is devoted to him, and who have fulfilled their vows? Those who reflect upon the (highest) principle and have their mind concentrated should meditate upon that ancient Nārāyaṇa, the highest soul, who has pervaded the world.

Bhīṣma said:

117-136. Speaking like this, Nārada, the divine sage, knowing the highest truth, and engaged in obliging others, vanished there only. Puṇḍarīka too, who was religious-minded, who had devoted himself to Viṣṇu, muttering the eight-syllabled hymn *Om namo Narāyaṇāya*, always uttering the words, 'O universal

soul, be pleased with me', establishing Govinda of the nature of nectar in the lotus of his heart, the ascetic free from the pairs (of pleasure, pain etc.), having no possessions, lived all alone for a long time in the pure and pleasing Śālagrāma (village). The very intelligent one does not see anything except Viṣṇu even in a dream. He too did not have sleep obstructing the goals of human life. By means of penance, celibacy, and especially purity, and when the impression of many existences had taken a root in one way or the other, he whose sins had gone away by the grace of the god of gods, and the witness in all the worlds, obtained great success as a devotee of Viṣṇu (would get). He saw Viṣṇu, dark, lotus-eyed, having a conch, a disc and a mace in his hands, wearing a yellow garment and of a good form. Lions, tigers and other beasts harming beings, gave up their natural enmity, and gathered near him; and O son of Pāṇḍu, with the functions of their senses kindly disposed, moved as they liked; and they pleasingly secured one another's welfare. Like that the water of the lakes and rivers was clear; and the seasons also were full of pure force and very pleasing. The breezes had a pleasing touch, the trees were full of flowers and fruits. All objects became favourable to the intelligent one. When Viṣṇu, the lord of the god of gods, who loved his devotees, was pleased with him, the mobile and immobile world was pleased with him. Then, at some time, the lord, the master of the world, having long eyes like lotuses manifested himself before the intelligent Puṇḍarīka. He had a conch, a disc and a mace in his hands. He wore a yellow garment. He was very bright. His eyes were large like lotuses. His face was like the orb of the moon. He had (on his person) bells, ear-rings, necklaces, armlets, and had a thread round his waist. He had the mark of Śrīvatsa, wore a yellow garment, and was adorned with Kaustubha. His body was surrounded with (i.e. he had put on) a garland of wood-flowers; his crown and ear-rings were shining. He shone with a bright sacred thread and with a hanging necklace of pearls. The god of gods was waited upon with chowries and fans by gods with Indra, siddhas, gandharvas, excellent sages, yakṣas, best nāgas, and groups of celestial nymphs. The sinless Puṇḍarīka having seen the lord of gods recognized the noble Viṣṇu; and bowing with folded palms, and with his mind pleased praised him.

Puṇḍarīka said:

137-146a. Salutation to you, O Viṣṇu, (to you) who are unstrained, eternal, qualityless and noble, and the only eye of the world. You are the lord of all beings, and you have no lord (who controls you). You are Govinda, you are Garuḍa-bannered, and destroy fear and affliction by favouring the beings. They say that all this rests in you who take up many forms. Everything is full of you. You are different from this world. You have created the world. O you having produced a lotus from your navel, salutation to you. Salutation to the mighty soul known from all the Upaniṣads. O destroyer of Kaiṭabha, O lord of all gods, you alone are the cause (of everything). Be pleased, O you living in my heart and holding a conch, a disc and a mace. Salutation to him who was the origin of all beings and who supports the earth. (Salutation to him) who takes up many forms, (to him) the strong Viṣṇu whose greatness gods, lords of gods, like Brahmā etc. do not realise, and which can be measured (only) with penance. I salute you, the greatness of whom, not being within the scope of words, is not had (i.e. known). You are not touched by birth etc. You are always to be truly reflected upon; in the same way, due to compassion for your devotees, you, O Puruṣottama, are seen in forms like Matsya (the Fish), Kūrma (the Tortoise) etc.

Bhīṣma said:

146b-148. O hero, Puṇḍarīka praised that Puruṣottama, the lord of the world, whom he desired to see for a long time—Padmanābha, Trivikrama, Viṣṇu. Trivikrama Viṣṇu spoke to Puṇḍarīka, the noble one, in a serious voice:

The lord said:

149-150. O child, O very intelligent Puṇḍarīka, I am pleased with you. Well-being to you. Ask for a boon. I shall give you whatever you have in your mind.

Hearing these words spoken by the lord of gods, the very intelligent Puṇḍarīka requested him like this:

Puṇḍarīka said:

151-153. What a great disparity between you (always) wishing the good (of all) and me of a wicked intellect? O Mādhava, O lord of gods, order that which is beneficial to me.

Thus addressed, the lord, being much pleased, spoke to the noble Puṇḍarīka standing by him with folded palms. "May you be happy. O you of a good vow, come along with me. You, helping (others), and an eternal soul, will always be with me."

Bhīṣma said:

154-169. When Viṣṇu, loving his devotees, spoke like this, drums sounded in heaven, and a shower of flowers fell down. Similarly gods like Brahmā said, 'Good, good'. Siddhas, gandharvas and especially kinnaras sang. There only the lord of gods, the lord of world took him, and mounting on Garuḍa, and being saluted by all people went. Therefore, O best king, you too, full of devotion to Viṣṇu, setting your heart and soul on him, engaged in doing good to his devotees, resort to him, after having duly worshipped him. Listen to his account which destroys all sins. O best king, adopt that means in great detail, being full of devotion to Viṣṇu, by which the universal soul will be pleased. Men averse to Viṣṇu do not reach him even after having performed hundreds of horse-sacrifices and Vājapeya sacrifices. He who has (but) once uttered the two letters *Ha-ri* has girt up his loins (i.e. is ready) for going to salvation. They in whose heart Viṣṇu, dark-blue like a lotus, abides, profit and succeed. Whence would they be defeated? He who, being composed, would listen to or recite this everyday, is free from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's world.

O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, having heard this greatness of the names (of Viṣṇu), religious merit, worldly prosperity and salvation undoubtedly accrue (to him). A brāhmaṇa who is born in a pure family and who is greatly devoted to the Vedas, who is Viṣṇu's devotee is of the nature of Viṣṇu and never any other brāhmaṇa. That man who utters the name (of Viṣṇu) in (i.e. with) his mouth, who is intent upon meditating upon Viṣṇu in his heart, who has (the marks of) a conch and a disc, wearing Tulasī-garland, should be known, O learned one, to be liberated while living. Having enjoyed many

pleasures, he delights, along with twentyone (members of) his family, in Viṣṇu's world. Undoubtedly Puṇḍarīka, according to his capacity, got salvation. Due to devotion Viṣṇu is permanently pleased. At the time of the worship of a deity and penance, the singing of (the praise of) Viṣṇu, especially in one's own house in the Kali age, is said to be equivalent to the chanting of Sāmans.

CHAPTER EIGHTYONE

The Importance of Gaṅgā

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O you very intelligent one, tell (me) again the importance of Gaṅgā, having repeatedly heard which, all the sages are free from attachment. O lord, O master of all, what kind of greatness is of her? I have formerly learnt about her origin. I have (however) not heard about her greatness. You are the first among all beings and the ancient god.

Mahādeva said:

3-11. The sages came to see Bhīṣma, resembling Bṛhaspati in intelligence, Indra in valour, and lying on the bed of arrows. (The sages were:) Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Aṅgiras, Gautama, Agastya, and Sumati, the wise one; Viśvāmitra, the omniscient Sthūlaśiras, the chief of the Pramathas, Raibhya, Bṛhaspati, Vyāsa, Pavana, Kaśyapa, Dhruva, Durvāsas, Jamadagni, Mārkaṇḍeya, Gālava, Uśanas, Bhāradvāja, Kratu and Āstīka also, Sthūlākṣa, Sarvalokākṣa, Kaṇva, Medhātithi, Kuśa, Nārada, Parvata, Sudhanvā and the brāhmaṇa, Cyavana, Matibhū, Bhuvana, Dhaumya, Śatānanda, Kṛtavraṇa, Jāmadagnya Rāma, Ṛcīka and others. Dharma's

son, along with his younger brothers duly saluted him, and duly honoured them, venerable to the world. The noble ones, with penance as their treasure, when honoured, were seated comfortably, and had talks about Bhīṣma and divine way of life. At the end of the talks of the sages of purified souls, Yudhiṣṭhira, having saluted Bhīṣma by (bowing) his head, asked this:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

12. O grandsire, tell me which countries are very holy, which mountains and hermitages should always be resorted to by those who seek religious merit.

Bhīṣma said:

13-23. In this matter only they relate the history—the dialogue between (Śibi) gleaning ears of corn and a siddha, O king Yudhiṣṭhira. A siddha having walked about this entire earth, reached the house of the noble Śibi, (living by) gleaning ears of corn. He knew the essence of metaphysics; he had always curbed his senses. He had given up attachment and hatred, and was proficient in wise acts. He was always the best among the devotees of Viṣṇu. He was very much devoted to holy acts about Viṣṇu. He did not censure Viṣṇu's devotees. He was always devoted to righteousness. He was always engaged in yogic practices. He wore (the marks of) a conch and a disc. He knew the truth of worshipping the deity three times a day, and he was always devoted to Viṣṇu. He deliberated about what is right and what is wrong with those learned in Vedic lores. He always recited the Vedas; and always honoured (his) guests. Thinking of (visiting) a holy place, he always subsisted on gleaned corn. That brāhmaṇa having the form of Viṣṇu, knew all that was reflected upon and sung by the self-born one. He was proficient in the significance of various ways of life, and was always inclined to the Immutable. Once he went to Śibi's house. The noble-minded (Śibi) seeing him, offered him due hospitality. (Then) Śibi asked him the cause of the auspiciousness of the regions. (Śibi) who gleaned ears of corn, said: "O best brāhmaṇa, please tell me affectionately (i.e.

due to your affection for me), which countries, regions, mountains, and hermitages are auspicious."

The siddha said:

24-42. Those countries, regions, mountains, and hermitages in which the best river Gaṅgā is always present, are auspicious. That good position (i.e. obtaining heaven) which one would get by resorting to Gaṅgā is not obtained by penance, celibacy, sacrifice and gifts. That pleasure which is had by those self-governed people bathing in Gaṅgā, is not had by means of hundreds of sacrifices. A man swimming (i.e. bathing) in the water of Gaṅgā shines after removing his sins, as the sun shines at his rise by dispelling darkness. O brāhmaṇa, as a heap of cotton having reached (i.e. come in contact with) fire perishes, similarly a dip in Gaṅgā removes all sins. He who would drink the Gaṅgā-water heated by the sun's rays, is equivalent to one free from mist and is superior to fire. The man who has bathed in Gaṅgā is superior to the man who has observed the Cāndrāyaṇa vow standing on one foot. The best man who uses the Gaṅgā-water for a month (is superior to) the man who stands with his head down for a myriad years. Being free from (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder he goes to Viṣṇu's (position). This Gaṅgā destroys sins like the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. By merely remembering her, the killer of an infant is freed in a moment. That Prayāga, the lord of the holy places, is difficult to be secured by the devotees of Viṣṇu. Having bathed there a man would quickly go to Vaikuṇṭha. He does not know (i.e. care for) what is dear and what is not dear. He does not obtain religious merit or sin. Having bathed in Gaṅgā, one is freed from a great sin. He who would say 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā' even from hundreds of yojanas (away from Gaṅgā), is free from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's world. A killer of a brāhmaṇa, of a cow, a drunkard, a killer of an infant is free from all sins and quickly goes to heaven. He also sees excellent Viṣṇu. He who bathes at the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī goes to Vaikuṇṭha. As darkness vanishes when the sun rises, in the same way sins perish just by bathing in her. By bathing at

Gaṅgāvarta, Kuśāvarta, Gallika, Nīlaparvata, at the holy place of Kanakhala, there is no birth. O king, the best man, knowing like this, and repeatedly bathing in Gaṅgā, is freed from sin. Viṣṇu is always the best among gods, horse-sacrifice among sacrifices, Aśvattha among all trees, similarly Gaṅgā is always (the best among rivers).